




# Annual Report 2022



[geelongsustainability.org.au](https://geelongsustainability.org.au)





We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people, the Traditional Owners of the land and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise their stewardship & continuing connection to land, water and the environment.

Sovereignty was never ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.





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# About Geelong Sustainability

## Our Vision

For people and our planet to thrive within sustainable limits

Geelong Sustainability is a not-for-profit community association and registered charity. We deliver projects that are focused on four strategic priorities - Climate Action, Renewable Energy, the Circular Economy and Sustainable Cities.

Since our establishment in 2007, Geelong Sustainability has become the region's leading sustainability group with extensive networks in community, government and business throughout Geelong and the Barwon region. We are recognised for our evidence-based innovative projects, which educate and support our community's transition to a net zero, circular economy.

We have 270 financial members, over 100 active volunteers, and a broader supporter base of 18,000 newsletter and social media subscribers.

Read more information at [geelong sustainability.org.au](https://geelong sustainability.org.au)

## Our Mission

Empowering people to protect and regenerate our planet

## Our Values

**Objectivity** - We ensure contemporary data and evidence-based research informs our work and determines our goals and priorities.

**Passion and Positivity** - We are passionate about promoting positive action that has a meaningful impact on our community and planet.

**Democracy and Empowerment** - We seek to engage and empower people, businesses and communities with democratic processes, real life experiences, up-to-date knowledge and practical tools that enable effective action.

**Respect and Trust** - We always act in a manner that respects people, builds collaboration and sustains public trust in our organisation.

**Innovation** - We are highly adaptive and responsive to change, building on our strong foundations to experiment with new ways of doing things that are different and better.

**Diversity and Inclusion** - We are proactively getting people involved, demonstrating that diversity, equity and inclusion make our community richer and stronger.



GS team and partners at the EnergyTips website launch

## Our Team Throughout 2021/2022

### BOARD

Amy White  
Dan Cowdell  
Fred Ritman  
Jennifer Jarrard  
Jonathan Wright  
Louise Beames  
Meredith Crittenden  
Marilyn Harris  
Sal Fisher  
Sanja Van Huet  
Tim Adams  
Vicki Perrett  
Vivienne Burke

### LEAD VOLUNTEERS

James Rourke- Dunkley  
Noreen Nicholson

Yvonne Parker  
John Pearce

### PUBLIC FUND SUBCOMMITTEE

Dave Campbell  
Fred Ritman  
Kerri Erler  
Sarah Jelley

### STAFF

Dan Cowdell  
Emilie Flynn  
Karina Donkers  
Keith Reynard  
Megan Discher  
Steve Turnock  
Trina Butko

### PROJECT CONTRACTORS

Behzad Falahati  
James Rourke-Dunkley  
Jay Clarke  
John Pearce  
Mark Borroni  
Sally Hiller  
Scott Barnes  
Tim Adams  
Vicki Perrett

Read more about our team:  
[geelong sustainability.org.au/committee/](https://geelong sustainability.org.au/committee/)

# President's Report

It's my pleasure to report to our members, partners and supporters that in 2022, Geelong Sustainability recorded its biggest year yet! In terms of grants, revenue, projects and achievements it was an absolute breakout year. Despite many challenges, we continued to fulfil our mission of empowering people to regenerate and protect the planet.

At 30 June 2022, our membership was 272, composed of 136 individual members, 83 families, 48 businesses, 5 students and 1 community member. While membership growth this year was a modest 9%, by comparison our subscriber list grew by 19%. Our monthly newsletter now reaches over 6,200 people including many stakeholders.

In Financial Year 2022 our revenue almost hit the \$1 million threshold! At just over \$950,000, it was a huge, almost fourfold increase on the previous year (\$204,000). This large increase was due to several major renewable energy and circular economy projects. Funded through Sustainability Victoria, these state government grants made up over 80% of our income.

## Our achievements

After lots of Zoom meetings during lockdowns, it was lovely to host in-person events again, including returning to Beav's Bar. People really relished the opportunity to reconnect after lockdowns. Throughout the year, we've continued to implement our Strategy 2025 and pursue activities aligned to our four chosen UN Sustainable Development Goals: 1) Climate Action, 2) Renewable Energy, 3) Sustainable Cities and 4) Circular Economy.

Our CEO will provide a detailed briefing on our key events, projects and advocacy work this year as well as our future priorities.

## Organisational priorities

This year, we've made further progress on our key organisational priorities:

- 1. Advocating for Climate Action** - We've continued to advocate strongly at the local, state and federal levels for ambitious science based targets and effective action. We've supported the Geelong Renewables Not Gas campaign and written numerous submissions and given evidence at the Viva EES hearings.
- 2. Building an Informed Community** - We've improved our website and communications and reviewed our volunteer strategy to better inform how we can empower our community.
- 3. Establishing & Leveraging Partnerships** - We've continued to develop mutually beneficial alliances with many organisations (more info later).

- 4. Expanding our Capability & Impact** - While our capability to deliver impactful projects is excellent, our pressing challenge this year was to expand our capacity and relieve our exhausted office bearers (more info later).

## External awards

While we rarely boast, it's always lovely when staff and volunteers receive external recognition for their work.

- Dan Cowdell won the CoGG's Climate Action Award for his leadership on the Geelong Community Solar Program
- Steve Turnock & Megan Discher shared the CoGG's Climate Action Award with Dan for their work on the Barwon South West Community Power Hub
- Vicki Perrett accepted the CoGG's Waste Reduction Award for the inaugural Geelong Circular Living Show, and
- Noreen Nicholson won CoGG's Women in Community Life Award for Climate Action, Disaster and Resilience.

## Network & partnerships

We've focused strongly on growing its networks.

- GS is proud to be the only community organisation that is a CoGG Vision Partner.
- GS maintains membership of several local organisations including: G21 Regional Alliance, CfG (Committee for Geelong), Geelong Chamber of Commerce, BCN (Bellarine Catchment Network), BRACE (Barwon Regional Alliance for Community Energy) and RICE (Regional Innovation for a Circular Economy).
- GS representatives are contributing to the G21 Sustainability Pillar, the RICE committee, BCN and several Barwon Water environmental and project advisory groups.
- GS is also an organisational member of the Australian Conservation Foundation and Environment Victoria.

GS is always seeking ways to collaborate and build partnerships. We know it's through effective partnerships that we can deliver more impactful projects.

We'd like to acknowledge the following recent and/or current partnerships:

- Funding bodies: DELWP, Sustainability Victoria, and all G21 councils: City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire, Borough of Queenscliffe and Golden Plains Shire

- Philanthropic partner: PMF Foundation
- Project partners: Circular Economy Victoria, BRACE, Barwon Water, Deakin University, the Gordon as well as our business members

I'd like to make special mention here of the Leaders for Geelong program run by the Committee for Geelong. GS has benefited greatly with consecutive teams working on projects over the last 2 years. The 2021-22 team worked on the Net Zero Roadmap project and the 2022 team developed a Membership Growth Strategy for us. Their supporter survey produced some valuable insights including what people value most about their association with GS. In addition to our community education and regular events, people valued intrinsic aspects, in particular:

- A feeling of making a difference
- Advocacy on behalf of our region on sustainability matters
- The opportunity to connect with like-minded people

### Organisational changes

Last year, I flagged the imperative for GS to make some significant operational changes. While our exponential growth was fantastic, it had generated unsustainable workloads for our volunteer office bearers. In addition, after a 2-year trial, the Committee agreed the business model for our social enterprise, GreenLight, was unviable as it wasn't able to generate a profit back to GS.

Fortunately, our positive balance sheet meant that GS had sufficient accrued equity to bring on some part-time administrative staff. Aware that we had five large contracts to be delivered in 2022, Dan Cowdell was contracted to supervise these projects and GreenLight's services. He managed these complex tasks so well that in February the Committee decided it was time to appoint our first CEO. We were delighted when Dan Cowdell accepted the role and stood aside from the Committee.

Without further state government funding for the Barwon South West Community Power Hub, we had to farewell several staff members in June. We were pleased to be able to retain Emilie Flynn as an Executive Assistant and to re-contract Karina Donkers on other funded projects.

The transition from all volunteer-run to having paid administrative staff has been monumental. It has

required a significant rethink and revision of policies and procedures as well as roles and responsibilities.

As a registered charity, GS needs to be innovative and resilient as well as responsive to the emerging needs within our community. To that goal, the new Board will undertake a planned review of the Strategic Plan early in 2023. I have every confidence that GS will continue to flourish as a proudly independent, volunteer-led, not-for-profit community association delivering meaningful change in our community.

### Acknowledgements

GS has built its success over the last decade upon the amazing contributions of its many passionate and capable volunteers. Going forward, GS will also benefit from its fabulous staff.

### Closing

Geelong Sustainability is an amazing organisation! It's enabled me to learn so much about sustainability and to connect with so many interesting, clever and passionate people. I encourage anyone with agency to get involved and help our region achieve a fast and fair transition.

It's been an honour to serve on the Committee over the last 12 years and as President for the last 7 years. Now is the right time for me to make way for a new Board and to wish them every success. While I will still play a climate advocacy role, I'm looking forward to having more time for bike riding and bird watching.



**Vicki Perrett**  
President



# CEO's Report

I'm thrilled to report to our members in my new capacity as Geelong Sustainability's inaugural Chief Executive Officer, having started the role in February 2022.

Frustrated and concerned about climate change, I first got involved with Geelong Sustainability back in 2013, and later joined the committee, led our renewable energy pillar, and also served as President for a term.

A lot has happened since 2013. We have achieved some remarkable outcomes for our community, but there is still plenty of work to be done. It's the critical decade and 2021-2022 has most certainly been a year for positive action. It was also a challenging year with COVID-19 lockdowns continuing throughout most of 2021 but despite this it was Geelong Sustainability's most successful year to date.

We delivered several major projects across Geelong and the Barwon South West region such as the Community Power Hub and Small Business Energy Saver Program, which delivered significant community benefits and were of a size and scale that required a team of five staff.

I'm deeply grateful for the incredible work done by our fantastic team of staff - Steve Turnock, Emilie Flynn, Karina Donkers, Keith Reynard and Megan Discher - whose efforts have resulted in such a successful year.

Geelong Sustainability also delivered an ambitious program of volunteer led projects with over 7,000 people attending our events such as Clever Living Seminars, Green Drinks, Sustainable House Day, the Circular Living Challenge, Circular Living Show, and 100% Electric Vehicle program. A remarkable 6,000 hours of volunteer effort made these events possible. An overview of each program is provided in the 'Key Highlights' section of this report.

The Geelong Community Solar Program concluded in late 2021, having supported 276 households and businesses to install solar and battery systems. The results speak for themselves:

- 1.7MW Solar and 835kWh battery storage
- 5,117 solar panels installed
- \$4M+ of renewable energy investment
- 54,740 Tons CO<sub>2</sub>e emission reduction over 25 years

The program also provided a broader community dividend with our project partners RACV Solar donating over 100kW of solar to eight not-for-profit community organisations:

- Anglesea Art House, 7.8kW
- Apollo Bay Mechanics Institute Hall, 5kW
- Birregurra Bowls Club, 6.4kW
- Feed Me Bellarine, 20kW
- Gellibrand Community Hall, 10kW
- Norlane Community Centre, 22kW
- Point Lonsdale Bowls Club, 25kW
- Torquay Tigers Clubrooms, 26kW



City of Greater Geelong Climate Action Award winners with the Geelong Mayor and Councillors



The Community Power Hub project was a huge focus for the year. The \$496,000 project was led by Geelong Sustainability on behalf of the Barwon Region Alliance for Community Energy and brought together an alliance of community energy groups and local government from across the Barwon South West to work together towards common goals. Over a short 12-month period the project delivered remarkable outcomes:

- Established the Community Energy Revolving Fund
- Funded the first project, a 60kW system at YMCA Stadium in Newtown
- Raised \$200,000+ of donations from the community and philanthropics for community energy projects
- Completed four community solar projects in Anglesea, Apollo Bay, Point Lonsdale and Torquay, worth 55kW in total
- Supported not-for-profit community organisations to develop and understand the business case of solar, in the process creating a pipeline of 13 implementation-ready community solar projects, with a total of 462.3kW of solar worth \$487,444
- Created an online energy efficiency resource - [energytips.org.au](http://energytips.org.au)
- Facilitated a series of community engagement webinars and forums, with a total of 474 participants
- Fostered the creation of two new community energy groups in Portland and Hamilton
- Completed feasibility studies for a Community Energy Retailer for the region, Community Batteries in Queenscliffe and Energy Autonomy in Apollo Bay

This year Geelong Sustainability also directly engaged with over 500 small businesses as part of the Small Business Energy Saver Program. This program was delivered through our social enterprise, GreenLight, and helped support local businesses with access to state government rebates for the upgrade to energy efficient appliances.



We established a framework of impact reporting this year and it's extremely encouraging to see the significant impact Geelong Sustainability has been able to make in the community. Since establishment in 2007 we have:

- Facilitated over \$7M of investment in renewable energy through our projects
- Received over \$1.4M in grants for sustainability projects
- Initiated projects which will avoid over 100,000 tons of CO2 emissions over their lifetime.

This is a testament to what a small group of dedicated members of the community can achieve!

I'd like to thank you for your support and ongoing membership. It's so exciting to see what we can achieve together by empowering people to accelerate the transition to a smarter, climate resilient, clean energy future.

Moving into 2023 Geelong Sustainability is now uniquely placed to make such a positive impact on our economy, community and the environment, and I hope that you will continue to join us.



**Dan Cowdell**  
CEO

# Our Impact

Our Impact Since Establishment:



## 15 Years of Operation

Established in October 2007, Geelong Sustainability is celebrating 15 years of supporting our community to live more sustainably.



## 108,251 Tons of CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Avoided

Over the lifetime of Geelong Sustainability initiated projects and activities.



## \$1,477,780 of Grants Received

From Local and State Governments since our establishment in 2007.



## \$7,297,112 of Investment in Renewable Energy

Within the community as a result of Geelong Sustainability initiated projects and activities.

## The 2021/2022 Year in Numbers:



### 272 Financial Members

- 136 Individual Members
- 83 Family Members
- 5 Student Members
- 48 Business Members

### \$29,518 Donations

78 Donors, \$378 Average Donation

### \$836,987 Grants Received

57% of grants received since establishment



COMMUNITY  
ENERGY  
REVOLVING  
FUND

Pay The Community Energy Re

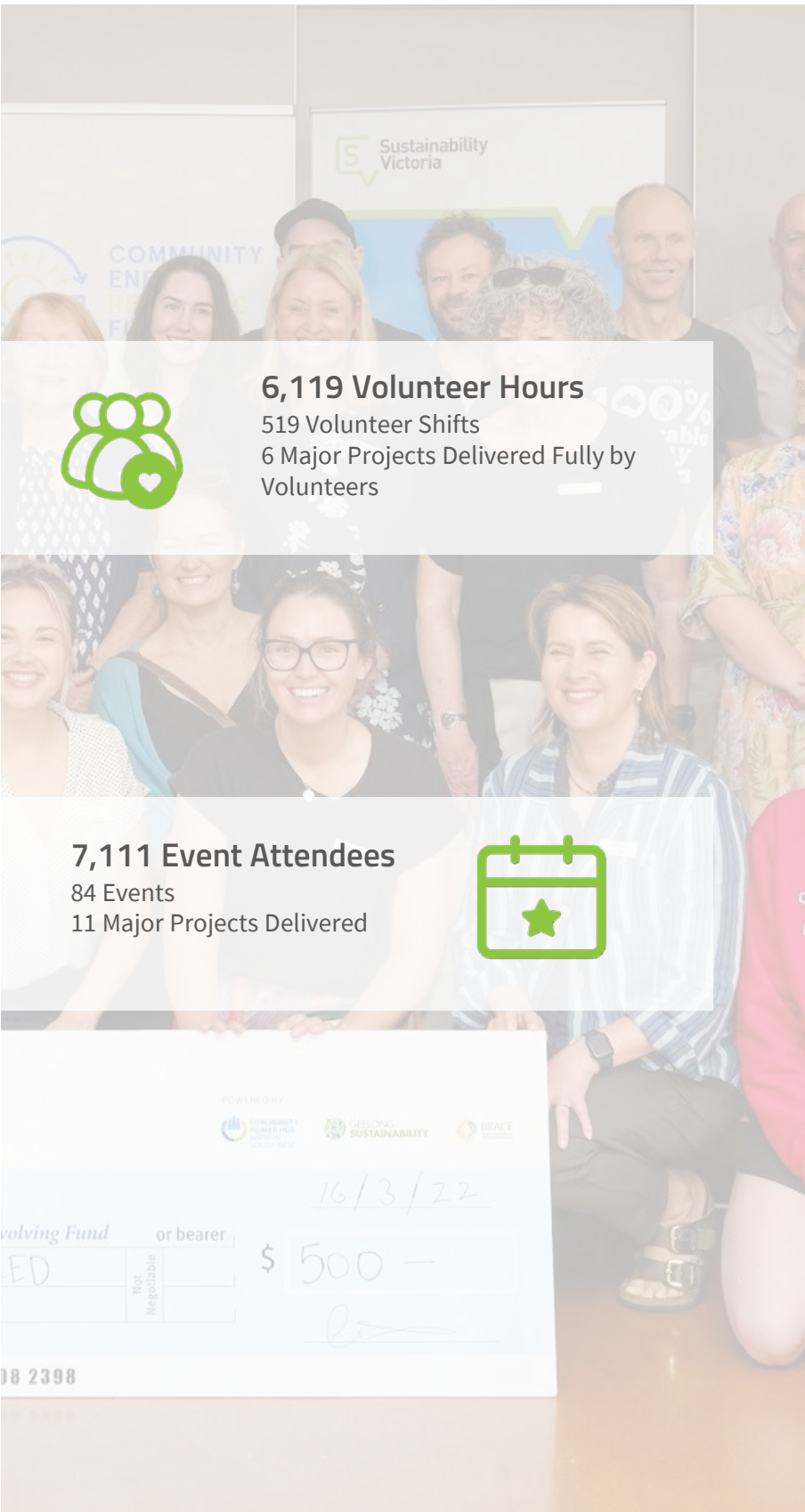
The Sum of FIVE HUNDR

(Drawer)

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Solar launch at YMCA Newtown for the Community Power Hub





**6,119 Volunteer Hours**

519 Volunteer Shifts  
6 Major Projects Delivered Fully by Volunteers

**7,111 Event Attendees**

84 Events  
11 Major Projects Delivered



**Our Reach in 2021/2022:**



**11,515 Social Media Followers**

6,044 Facebook Followers  
3,834 Instagram Followers  
786 Twitter Followers  
851 LinkedIn Followers

**202,684 Facebook Page Reach**

3,490 Facebook Page Visits



**6,814 Newsletter Subscribers**

91 Emails Sent to Subscribers



**63 Articles in the Media**

Newspapers, Radio and Local Newsletters



**28,433 Website Page Views**

11,504 Website Users  
16,201 Website Sessions

# Key Highlights



## Circular Economy

### Circular Living Challenge

The Geelong Circular Living Challenge was delivered over an eight-week period from 10 April to 5 June 2022. It was our region’s first ever Circular Living Challenge and introduced our community to the circular economy via a fun, engaging and informative online Challenge. Participant feedback indicated that they learnt about the circular economy, tried new behaviours, engaged with businesses, made new connections and developed sustainable habits.

### Circular Living Show

Geelong Sustainability planned and coordinated Geelong’s first ever Circular Living Show and EV Show n Shine, which was held at the Geelong Showgrounds on Saturday

30 April. The Circular Living Showcase project was a community engagement program designed to educate people in our region about circular economy principles and introduce them to new skills, products and services.



Circular Living Challenge wrap event





## Climate Action



The Real Deal Geelong alliance members



March Green Drinks at Beavs Bar

### Climate Action Advocacy

Geelong Sustainability reinvigorated its Climate Action Pillar with fresh volunteers during the last Financial Year. The Pillar advocates for urgent action on climate change, responds to public policy development, conducts public engagement and education activities and partners with like minded organisations for greater impact.

### Green Drinks

Throughout the year, we hosted a series of community information events focused on climate change and environmental education, including keynote guest speakers and climate-focused activities. These events present an opportunity for like-minded community members to gather, share their experiences, and learn from one another.

### Real Deal Geelong

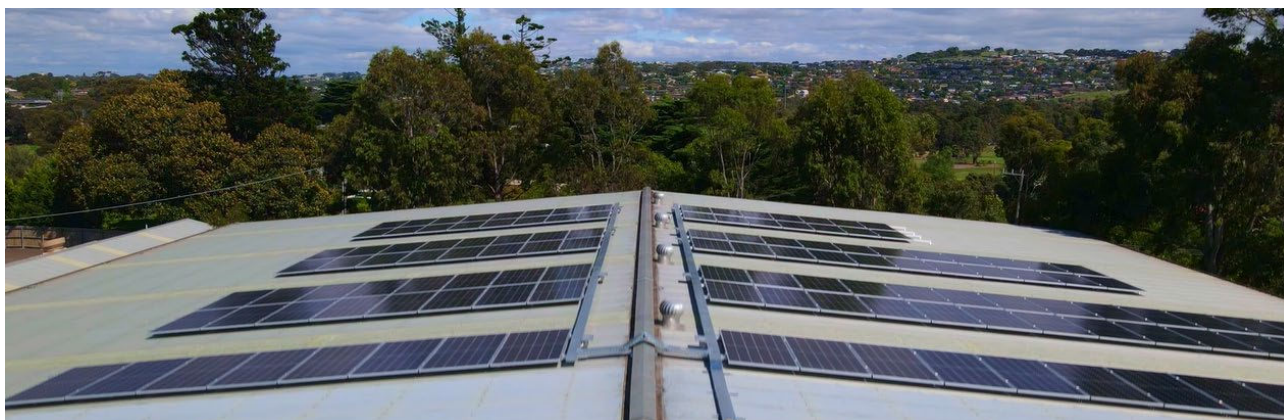
The Real Deal seeks to avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis and ensure that every person has the opportunity to determine their best life. Geelong Sustainability is part of an alliance of unions, faith groups and community organisations who have been meeting regularly to discuss how to win a Real Deal for Geelong to ensure no-one is left behind in the energy transition.



**This decade is critical if we are to prevent runaway climate change. It's everyone's responsibility - citizens, businesses and all levels of government.**



# Renewable Energy



## Neighbourhood Battery Feasibility Study

The study set out to determine the feasibility of establishing a series of neighbourhood batteries located across Geelong to enable residents with solar to store their excess energy and draw it back as needed. The project concluded in August, determining that at this time neighbourhood batteries are not viable without significant grant funding. [Read the detailed feasibility study report.](#)

## Geelong Community Solar Program

Over 270 households and businesses have participated in the Geelong region's largest ever community solar bulk-buy program. Designed to increase the uptake of renewable energy in our local

region, we are pleased to report that, thanks to the Program, there have been 8 solar systems donated to community organisations which total over 100kW.

## Community Power Hub

Our biggest project of the last Financial Year, the Community Power Hub (CPH) saw the establishment of the Community Energy Revolving Fund; a 60kW solar system installed at YMCA Newtown; four additional solar installations totalling 55kW; an online home energy resource website built; a webinar and forum series which attracted 474 participants; three feasibility studies across the region; over \$200,000 of donations raised for community energy projects; support provided to not-for-profit community organisations to access

solar; the creation of an implementation-ready pipeline of community energy projects; and so much more.

## GreenLight

Geelong Sustainability's Social Enterprise, GreenLight, delivered a range of renewable energy projects in the last Financial Year. The Small Business Energy Saver Program saw over 500 businesses engaged to take advantage of government rebates for energy efficient appliances. GreenLight also ran the Corangamite Energy Efficiency Program 2.0, and continued delivering energy services for the public, including Residential Scorecard Assessments, Thermal Camera Assessments and 1:1 Energy Efficiency Consultations.





## Sustainable Cities

### 100% Electric Vehicle Project

This project developed and delivered educational and practical activities such as an EV driving experience with access to EV owners to educate and empower people to live more sustainably. We aimed to create community impact across a wide geographical area highlighting the environmental, health and cost benefits of owning a 100% electric vehicle. Community engagement activities included EV test drives, community markets, school presentations and running ABCs of EVs seminars in collaboration with local libraries.

### Climate Safe Rooms

A pilot project to protect the most vulnerable members of our community from the effects of more frequent weather extremes by providing a Climate Safe Room. This is a room that will protect residents from the extremes, that is thermally efficient, economical to heat and cool, and that can be a safe haven during times of extreme heatwaves and extreme cold. Data monitoring has continued since early 2021 until July 2022. The project is now in the data analysis phase, with final results from the research planned to be completed in early 2023.

### Sustainable House Day

In 2021, Geelong Sustainability coordinated its thirteenth SHD weekend. Due to Covid restrictions, the event was run online, whilst retaining the wonderful peer to peer knowledge sharing and expert advice of the traditional event. Over 1,200 people attended the online event. The primary purpose of SHD is to showcase exemplar sustainable homes across our region. GS wants people to learn how they can live happier, healthier lives in homes with more thermal comfort, fewer carbon emissions and lower running costs.



100% EV Community Engagement at Earthfest

# Networks & Partnerships

Geelong Sustainability has been an active contributor to a number of regionally significant networks, partnerships and advisory committees. Throughout 2021 and 2022 we've collaborated with numerous organisations, building lasting partnerships for ongoing impact.

## Advisory Committees

We extended our influence and advocated for sustainable outcomes through the **G21 - Geelong Regional Alliance (G21)** Sustainability Pillar, **Barwon Water's** Key Stakeholders Group, Environmental Advisory Committee, Porrongitj Karrong and Aqueduct Project. We are **City of Greater Geelong** Clever and Creative Vision Partners, and sit on their Sustainability Advisory Committee, and Cleantech Innovations Board.

## Barwon Region Alliance for Community Energy (BRACE)

BRACE is a regional network of community energy groups from across the Barwon South West. Through cooperation and collaboration BRACE members want to speed up our region's transition to renewable energy. BRACE members played a significant role in the Community Power Hub project delivery. Geelong Sustainability continues to contribute to and support the BRACE by coordinating monthly network meetings.

## Barwon South West Community Power Hub Roundtable Advisory Group

Geelong Sustainability formed a Roundtable Advisory Group to guide the Community Power Hub project. This collective of 20 groups and organisations from across the Barwon South West region worked together to develop and deliver community energy projects with the aim to increase access to and involvement in community renewable energy throughout the Barwon South West region.

## Committee for Geelong

Our board members contributed to Committee for Geelong workshops and supported project teams in the Leaders for Geelong Program. The 2021 project developed a Roadmap to a Net Zero Carbon Community in Geelong. [Read the report](#). The 2022 project team focused on a Membership Growth Strategy - researching and recommending best practice to help grow member services at Geelong Sustainability, increasing grassroots community action in environment & sustainability for the region. [Read the report](#).

## Geelong Chamber of Commerce

A business network of over 900 businesses, we attended events to network with local businesses and connect with them about sustainability. We also worked closely with the Chamber to host Corporate Partner Business Breakfast as part of the Geelong Community Solar Program, which was attended by over 100 businesses.

## Regional Innovation for a Circular Economy (RICE)

Geelong Sustainability is a founding member of RICE, a not-for-profit association which aims to catalyse circular innovation in regional areas around Victoria. [RICE website](#).

Geelong Sustainability is an organisational member of the Bellarine Catchment Network, Australian Conservation Foundation and Environment Victoria. We also collaborate with and support the work of many other local community organisations.



2021 Leaders for Geelong Project Team



# Acknowledgements

Geelong Sustainability has built its success over the last decade upon the amazing contributions of its many passionate and capable volunteers, members, staff, contractors, partners and networks. This year there are many people and organisations who deserve recognition and thanks:

## 2022 BOARD MEMBERS

- Vicki Perrett
- Marilyn Harris
- Vivienne Burke
- Tim Adams
- Dan Cowdell
- Jonathan Wright
- Meredith Crittenden
- Scott Barnes

We wish to thank and acknowledge the huge contribution made by all board members this year.

## VOLUNTEERS

- Noreen Nicholson
- James Rourke-Dunkley
- John Pearce
- Yvonne Parker

We'd like to extend our thanks to all our volunteers who assisted with events, project teams or pillar taskforces.

## MEMBERS AND DONORS

Thank you to our financial members and donors for your ongoing support and encouragement.

## STAFF AND CONTRACTORS

- Dan Cowdell
- Emilie Flynn
- Sally Hiller
- Jess Hobbs
- Karina Donkers
- Megan Discher
- Steve Turnock
- Keith Reynard
- Mark Borroni

## PUBLIC FUND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Dave Campbell
- Sarah Jelley
- Kerri Erler
- Fred Ritman

## NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- ACF Community Geelong
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Barwon Region Alliance for Community Energy (BRACE)
- Barwon South West Community Power Hub Roundtable Advisory Group Members
- Barwon Water
- Bellarine Catchment Network
- Circular Economy Victoria
- City of Greater Geelong
- Committee for Geelong (CfG)
- CfG Leaders for Geelong Program 2021 Team:
  - Sophie Harris
  - Nicole Carter
  - Matt Crawley
  - Rohan Lovell
  - Justine White
  - Richard Lunz
- CfG Leaders for Geelong Program 2022 Team:
  - Kate Archbold
  - Chris Dewhurst
  - Renee Zebic
  - Sienna Mallon
- Community Power Agency
- Environment Victoria
- Ephe
- G21 - Geelong Region Alliance
- Geelong Chamber of Commerce

- Geelong Field Naturalists Club
- Geelong Media
- Geelong Regional Library Corporation
- Mondo
- RACV Solar
- Real Deal Geelong
- Regional Innovation for a Circular Economy (RICE)
- Renewable Energy Traders Australia
- Tango Energy
- YMCA Geelong

## SUPPORTERS

- Victorian Government, Department of Environment Land Water and Planning
- Sustainability Victoria
- City of Greater Geelong
- The Gordon
- Beavs Bar
- Sustainable House Day 2021 Sponsors:
  - CoGG
  - RACV Solar
  - Barwon Water
  - PowerPal
  - Homes With Integrity
  - Pickering Joinery
  - Barwon South West Waste & Resource Recovery Group
  - S'OR Construction
  - Thermosmart Windows
  - Bright Spark
  - Irons McDuff Architecture
  - Bios - Design Build Sustain
  - Surf Coast Shire

# Treasurer's Report

I am reporting to you as Acting Treasurer, a role I took on in February 2022 after assisting the Treasurer and bookkeeper in 2021.

Our organisation entered the 2022 financial year amidst the continuing challenges of COVID-19 and Victoria's lockdowns which created such a difficult operating environment in which to engage with the community and to deliver government projects.

Staff recruitment for two ambitious State government funded projects began immediately, the Community Power Hub and the Small Business Energy Saver Program. These were closely followed by a third, the Neighbourhood Battery Initiative with a fourth, the Circular Living Challenge on the horizon. While this massive surge in activity together with the opportunities it offered us to deliver meaningful project outcomes was very welcome, the volunteer committee of management was faced with a massive financial, administrative and human resource management workload for which it was ill prepared. From having no employees, the organisation became responsible for six staff and two contractors almost overnight.

In a huge leap of faith the committee decided to commit almost all of its reserves to firstly engaging a professional project manager in October 2021 to oversee all of its contractual responsibilities and then, in February 2022, to appoint its first CEO. Mr Dan Cowdell was appointed to both those roles.

The initial challenges facing the CEO related to HR management, project focus and integration, an improved financial management system, enhanced financial monitoring and reporting as well as a more efficient record keeping system. Meanwhile the committee instituted a new governance structure as described elsewhere in this report.

We have made great strides in what seems to have been an incredibly short period of time. The new and improved systems are working well and there are plans in place for a CRM (client relationship management system), website upgrades, membership enhancement, and communications and marketing strategies

## Overall

Geelong Sustainability posted an operating surplus of \$165,841 for the 2022 financial year bringing total equity

at the end of the reporting period to \$407,077.

## Revenue

Revenue increased in the 2022 financial year to \$950,276, a huge net increase of 365%.

Income items that contributed to revenue were:

- three substantial State government grants from DELWP and Sustainability Victoria,
- three small grants from City of Greater Geelong,
- seed funding to establish the Community Energy Rolling Fund, (CERF) and
- an increase in tax deductible donations from our supporters.

Membership income remained steady while there was a slight reduction in sales from our social enterprise, Greenlight and the closing of our Who Gives a Crap bulk toilet paper service.

## Expenses

The key expense items in FY22 were:

- employee expenses (salaries and salary on costs) and
- consultancy fees.

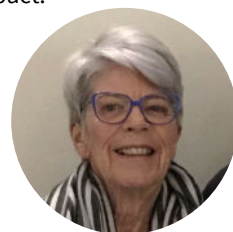
Consultants were engaged to deliver a number of projects:

- the Neighbourhood Battery Initiative,
- the Circular Living Challenge,
- Sustainable House Day 2021 and
- Greenlight energy efficiency services for households.

In addition, several complex technical research projects were undertaken by the Community Power Hub for which commercial consultants were engaged.

## The Future

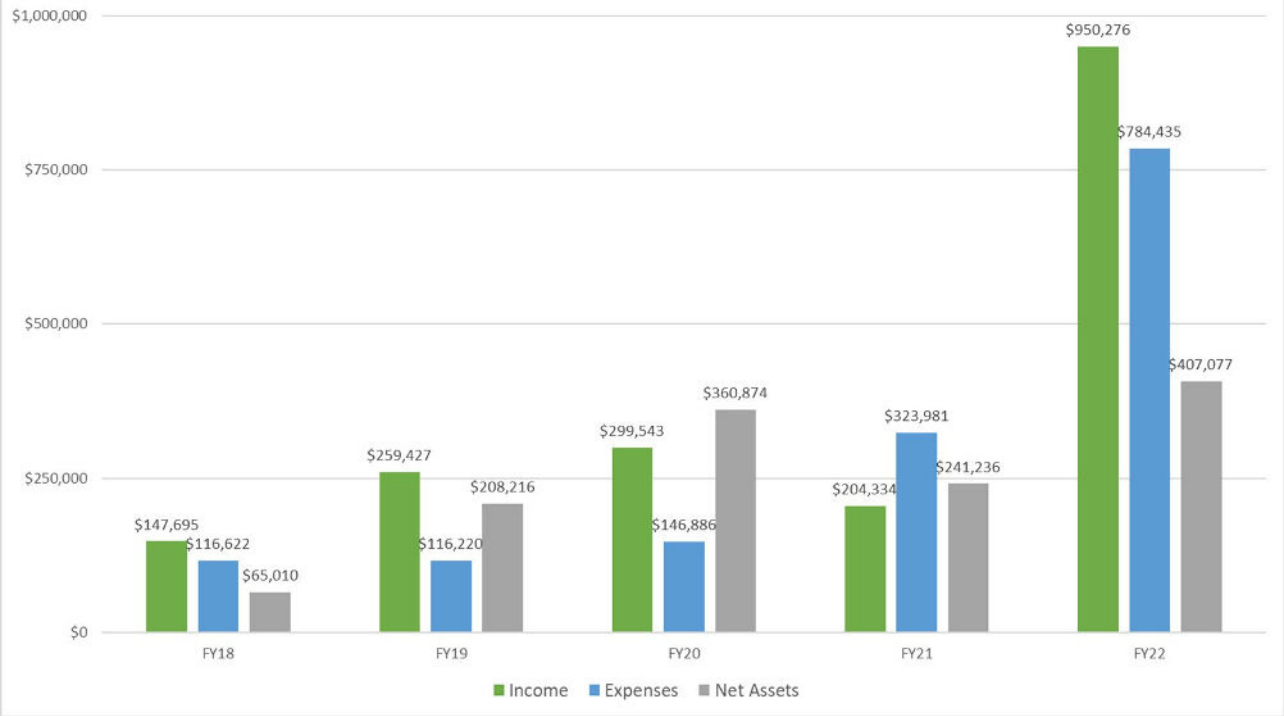
Geelong Sustainability's financial position is sound thanks to the work done by successive volunteer committees over many years. And thanks to the CEO, the organisation's core operating platform is now in far better shape enabling us to move forward, focus more strategically and have greater impact.



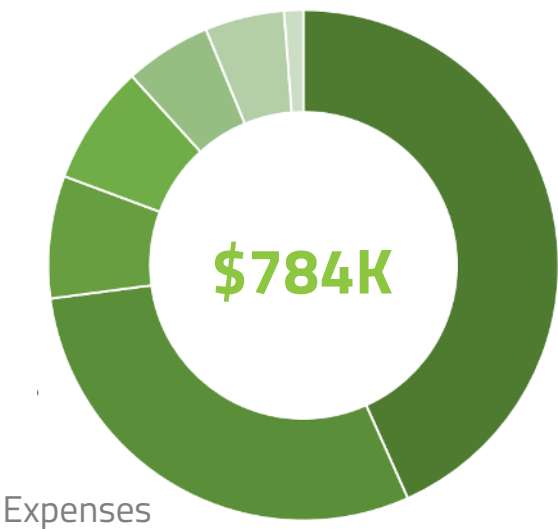
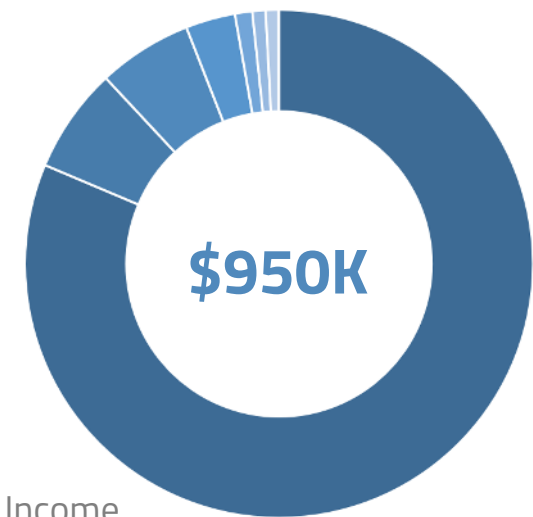
**Vivienne Burke**  
Acting Treasurer



# Five Year Financial Overview



## FY2021 Income & Expenses



We are a dynamic and passionate community group focused on sharing information, building community resilience, advocating for the environment and supporting effective action.

Join us today and contribute towards the campaigns, events and activities that will help achieve meaningful outcomes for our region and move us towards a zero-carbon future.

Together we can achieve so much more!

[geelongsustainability.org.au](https://geelongsustainability.org.au)

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