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ENVIRONMENT



Alice Moffett, one of 140 volunteers at the RePlant Byron community planting day in October.
Photo: Mike Frey

RePlant Byron takes root

While not everyone can afford to buy solar panels or an electric vehicle to reduce their carbon emissions, anyone can plant a tree. **Christobel Munson reports.**

At the October launch of RePlant Byron, more than 140 people – from babies to octogenarians - turned up at a private property in Ewingsdale to help plant 2,400 seedlings. Replant Byron is a project of Zero Emissions Byron (ZEB), which aims to plant 1.8 million trees in the Shire by the end of 2025.

"While our focus is on the potential of trees to drawdown carbon from the atmosphere, we're also relying on trees to provide habitat and restore biodiversity," said ZEB Chair Vicki Brooke.

Calculating the carbon in new plantings and adding older plantings by individuals and Landcare groups, RePlant Byron's tree-planting activities will help drawdown 15 to 20 per cent of Byron Shire's annual carbon emissions of 265,000 tonnes.

A number of community groups that share a passion for trees and the environment collaborated with ZEB to bring about the October planting, including Brunswick Valley Landcare and Bangalow Landcare. The Library of Stuff provided re-usable bamboo cups and plates for the morning tea provided

after the event.

Tree planting completed, the group heard from speakers introduced by Vicki Brooke: student activist Mia Thom, tennis champion and local landowner Pat Rafter, and Dr Kevin Glencross from SCU.

"This is a crucial day," Mia said. "Our actions mark the antidote. Taking positive action on climate change flies in the face of a government which refuses to take action. This is the time to make powerful change."

Kevin Glencross was impressed with the number of optimistic young people present, who are prepared to face the challenges of climate change. He pointed to the importance of planting trees in Byron Shire as it is a biodiversity hotspot.

"Community planting days are a wonderful way to gather community together for a common purpose," added Vicki. "As more people become aware of the impacts of climate change, taking positive action such as planting trees is a hopeful and satisfying activity. Tree planting is a gift for future generations."