

# Chair's Report 2020 2021

*Undaunted by COVID-19 restrictions our Zero Emissions Byron teams have beavered away, accomplishing much, largely from behind closed doors. Our objective is always to engage the local community in emissions reduction activities, to accelerate the Shire's transition to net zero emissions and to increase uptake of emissions reduction activities. This is how we do it:*



Our Communications team has been revolutionising the way we present ZEB to the world. That started with a completely overhauled website – for which, many thanks to ZEB Advisory Panelist, **Bridie Schmidt** and her company Savant Digital. Launched in April 2021, [www.zero Byron.org](http://www.zero Byron.org) contains up-to-date information on all ZEB activities, plus a wealth of resource material. Now, our 'news room' makes frequent **blog posts** highlighting innovative ways people in the Byron community are reducing their emissions across all sectors, as well as showcasing activities of our colleagues and businesses in the region. The website is popular with 1085 views in October alone, hosted by **Jason Lasky's** Hubway Design.



Our Community Engagement officer **Sasha Mainsbridge**, who gives new meaning to the term 'human dynamo', finds innovative ways of keeping the community alert to what any of us can do to reduce our carbon footprint. For instance, Sasha invented the 'Fight for Planet A & Win' competition, in which the 47 entrants told their inspiring stories of ways they found to curtail emissions, winning prizes donated by local businesses. This competition has now morphed into our online 'ZEB Stories of Low Carbon Living'. Check it out, as well as our online **Local Low Carbon Living Resources directory**, including 42 local resources.



On the media front, both social and print, the nimble and versatile **Communications team** headed by **Katrina Shields**, has been prolific. Scarcely a month goes by without another ZEB local print media story covering everything from the decrease in the cost of solar and the increase in the uptake of solar PV, to the launch of the replant Byron Alliance, through to answering questions about climate change and electric vehicles. At least eight times a year an audience of 1009 receives the **ZEB e-newsletter**, while our **Facebook** page has a reach of 1198 (468 people in the last week alone.) The **Friends of ZEB Facebook**, a closed group of 308, fields animated conversations about all things 'zero'. Our **Instagram** page has 553 followers now that our news/blog posts are linked to social media.



The Communications team also plays a fundamental role in staging and promoting our (fund raising) film nights, events, street stalls and workshops, finding them excellent opportunities to distribute our ACT NOW flyer, offering 12 actions you can take to make a difference about climate change. What the team is trying to do is to motivate people by focusing on positive outcomes. We help to "shift culture, improve sustainability literacy and normalise new behaviours," says Katrina. "We focus on personal, household, community and government actions, and highlight and amplify positive initiatives." Frequently throughout the year, we benefit so much from the design skills of **Shane Wales**, Wales Design, always on hand to graphically interpret our great ideas.



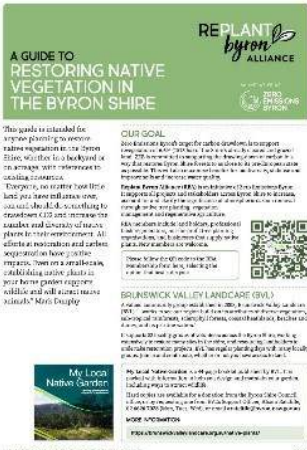
While our planned **Electric Vehicle Expo** has had to be postponed several times for the usual 2020-2021 reasons, the ZEB EV Team—two Board Members plus volunteers - nimbly shifted gear and instead, created a series of eight one-hour webinars, produced between August 2020 and April 2021, popular domestically, even reaching a European audience. These webinars are now available on youtube or the website. Series facilitator was the ever articulate **Mick O'Regan**, with top IT support from **Glenn Todd**, from Action Skills.



Through an **online survey** circulated through five Local Government Areas – Ballina, Tweed, Lismore, Richmond River and Byron Shire – we sought to uncover what holds people back from **purchasing an electric vehicle**. It attracted 274 entries. The winning entrant happily receives a day in a Tesla, courtesy of electric vehicle rental company, EVEE, while results are being shared with all five LGAs, helping councils work out location of EV charging stations, and which types of EVs are of most interest. “This will help us to advocate on your behalf to make EV ownership easier across our region,” says EV team leader **Dr Muriel Watt**. “We know that strategies designed for cities are not necessarily suitable to our region,” so entries telling us what people would like to see were most welcome. Results to be released before Christmas. See our new FAQs on EVs on the website, also known as the ‘Dummies Guide’.



On the environmental front, in March we launched the **Replant Byron Alliance**, headed by ecologist and conservation professional, our **Replant Alliance officer, Wren McLean**. We wanted to increase native vegetation and/or regenerative agriculture in the shire. How? By fostering, promoting, monitoring and recording the impact of land use changes in the shire, leading to carbon sequestration.



Wren has enlisted four organisations, seven landowners and two regen professionals into the Alliance, while collecting their data and tallying tree planting Shire-wide, so far accounting for **241,372 native trees** planted since ZEB began in 2015. We’re also in the process of developing a **methodology to calculate the carbon sequestration** of the trees planted.

In August, we published the useful ‘Guide to Restoring Native Vegetation in the Byron Shire’ devised by Wren and rainforest restorer and nurseryman, **Mark Dunphy**, to promote and encourage revegetation and regenerative agricultural practices. As well, Wren has been coordinating the development of two short films promoting local **Carbon Drawdown Champions**: one on ‘Good Fire’, and the other on a local resident who’s planted 50,000 trees. Over two years, ZEB planted and maintained 18,600 trees across the shire, including 2,330 planted as a **Community Forest** at popular tourist destination, The Farm.



ZEB Treasurer, **Robert Goodwill**, is the man behind the **ZEB Buildings** team. With Bangalow architect **John Grey**, he devised a flyer promoting sustainable building practices, available on the website and through Byron Council. With two other new team members — ZEB Director **Jennifer Grainger** and energy efficiency professional **Sebastian Crangle**— the Buildings team is working on a series of short films promoting the uptake of sustainable building design. “The concept is to feature sustainable design principles to optimise site potential; minimise non-renewable energy consumption; use environmentally preferable productions; protect and conserve water; enhance indoor environmental quality, and optimise operational and maintenance practices,” Jennifer explains. Watch out for their release in 2022.

Underpinning all our activities are our dedicated fundraisers. ZEB Director **Dr Anne Stuart**, in particular, has made a point of sourcing funding opportunities to finance our activities, as well as developing appropriate documentation for that purpose, with input and support from Advisory Panelist **Robert Rosen**. Applying for grant funding or other sources of funding is an ongoing challenge for a small team of six volunteer directors to pay for our two part-time project officers, so donations are always most welcome, more so when they come in monthly!



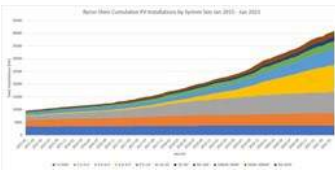
LOCAL NEWS



Byron Shire's plan for climate change

Byron Shire's plan for climate change... The regional Byron Shire would have various changes to...

Byron Shire Council and Byron Shire... The Council's plan for climate change...



We have continued to build our cooperative relationship with Byron Shire Council - particularly with their emission reduction team - as our emission reduction aspirations align. This happens through our participation on Council's Sustainability & Emissions Reduction Advisory Committee (SERAC) and through cross promotion of each others' initiatives such as the 'Carbon Clever' app offer, SunSPot Solar PV estimated benefits tool, and providing input into Council's climate change adaptation plan. Our Council is on track to achieve net zero emissions for its operations by 2025, a singularly great result as its operations, which includes sewerage treatment and waste management, are significant sources of emissions in the Shire.

ZEB is also represented on the Sustain Northern Rivers Energy Working Group. It seeks to find cooperative and innovative approaches to both prevent climate change, and increase renewable energy uptake, across the NSW Northern Rivers. We share information regularly and have had input, such as contributing to the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation of Councils Renewable Energy Prospectus for the area.

Since ZEB began in 2015, the size and number of solar PV installations in the Byron Shire has increased four-fold, based on APVI data for Byron postcodes. Total installed capacity is now over 40MW, with over a quarter of this from systems sized 6.5 – 9.5 kW. About 45% of houses in Byron Shire now have solar, higher than the NSW average of 26%. ZEB commissions periodic reports from for example, Point Advisory, to keep tabs on Greenhouse Gas Emissions trends in the Byron Shire.

ZEB activities could not happen without the interest, dedication and countless hours of voluntary labour from our hard-working Board of Directors: Katrina Shields, Anne Stuart, Muriel Watt, Robert Goodwill and Jennifer Grainger. I thank them for their passion and support. Should you wish to see our Annual Review please let me know.

This coming year, we hope you may find a way to join us, or contribute to our efforts to reduce the carbon emissions of Byron Shire.

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10 November 2021

Thanks to Chair

I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of the Board of Directors, to thank our Chair for her enthusiastic and committed work. Christobel is an inspiration to all of us and fosters a work ethic in a collaborative and harmonious way. We are indebted to her resilience and steadfast approach with the aim always to see the Shire benefit from our collective goal to reduce carbon emissions.

Katrina Shields, Deputy Chair