

NEWTOWN

Neighbourhood Centre

New(town) Beginnings #1/2020

Dear Neighbour,

Welcome to 2020: The year of collective action.

This will be the year that progress takes centre stage. It simply has to and we're all responsible for playing a key part in driving the progressive movement forward for the sake of our planet. No auditions required: the role is yours.

There's not much further commentary we can contribute regarding the carnage our country has experienced over the past few months. We've all been affected in ways we're yet to fathom or even measure, particularly our friends in regional communities who are on the frontline of this crisis. All we know is that the impact of these fires on our physical and mental health, not to mention on our land and animals, is immense and unparalleled, and must be addressed urgently.

We believe it is our responsibility to use our voice as a local grass roots community organisation, and to work alongside other local organisations and individuals, to inspire and support local action to address the climate crisis we are all facing.

Here at NNC we bear witness to what can happen when communities rally together to tackle a problem: positive outcomes. Our volunteer homeless outreach program has been so successful it's now about to be replicated in the City of Sydney CBD. So we know first-hand that grassroots community action works.

While we would dearly love to see stronger political leadership to address the reality of climate change, we are also determined to take action on the things which are in our control.

We want a better future, and to achieve that we need to support the communities who have been most dramatically affected by these fires, as well as looking at how we need to adapt our city lifestyles to focus on sustainability.

Here are some suggestions of positive action you can take:

- Donate to one of the many charities supporting bushfire relief
- Visit a bushfire affected community when it is safe to do so and support their local businesses
- Take action – find the cause or organisation you are passionate about that is contributing to social and environmental justice and then dedicate what you can to that cause every week
- Write to your local Member of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition. Write to anyone who has influence and demand action to address climate change now
- Engage in your local community – speak with neighbours, find out what they care about and how you can work together. Learn about local sustainability initiatives. Build networks and harness that energy
- Be an advocate for reconciliation and justice for First Nations Peoples. Ensure the knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who cared for this land for tens of thousands of years, is listened to, valued and acted on

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Being on the front-line gives us a special privilege and insight. We know hardship, but we also know the resilience and tenacity which we're all capable of.

Mel

Community Strengthening Team

P.S - We are currently talking with Sydney Sustainability and other partners about co-hosting a Forum on sustainability at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre in the next few months so people can connect with initiatives that are already happening, and discuss other ideas for local action.

Let us know if you have suggestions about local initiatives or organisations you would like to hear more about, or things you are already doing which you would like to share.

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