



2022 – 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

Living the Circular Economy

October 2021

Introduction

The Bower is an environmental charity with strong outreach into the social sector. Through our activities we reduce waste and CO2 emissions; reduce our ecological footprint; and outreach to social causes by assisting members of the community who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. For over 20 years we have pioneered waste reduction through reclamation of household goods, reuse and repair initiatives such as workshops, repair cafes, bespoke recycled materials, and resale at affordable prices of repurposed and preloved goods.

We continue to expand the educational component of our work to new initiatives such as tiny house courses, online workshops and tutorials, online sales, and diversification of our portfolio of hands-on workshops to meet the increasing demand of the public in the Inner West and Parramatta districts of Sydney.

We are an innovative social enterprise that is a living example of the circular economy - uniting social, environmental and reuse models in all of our operations.

The Bower's strategy for 2022-2027 sets out the overall direction for the organisation for this period. It focuses on how the Bower will implement our mission and the priorities we set for the years ahead. It should be read in conjunction with the 4 year business plan 2022-26 which is to be reviewed annually.

The Bower's Mission is to:

- **Environment:** Be a leader on zero waste production through the reclamation of household items and building materials for reuse and resale through reducing landfill, decreasing the need for new raw materials, and reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
- **Education:** Promote and initiate reuse and repair workshops, cafes and online programs, build cooperation with partner organisations, businesses and government.
- **Community:** Provide affordable goods and service; and redistribution to those in need such as low income housing and domestic violence survivors; build community and generate local employment.

The strategic plan has two phases the first is the move of our Headquarters from the Marrickville location at Addison Road Community Centre to Summer Hill where a waste and reuse hub will be created along with Reverse Garbage and the Inner West Council. .

The second phase is for our growth and expansion from the second half of 2022 to 26.

Goal 1: Relocation of HQ (Phase 1)

Our new site needs to be prepared and outfitted for us to commence operations at the former Summer Hill Council depot scheduled to be in April 2022.

The 'Big Move' allows us to expand our operations both physically, due to a much increased space, and also creatively. It is important to bring the Bower community with us while settling into our new home to continue to interact with our valued supporters and at the same time connect to the Summer Hill and surrounding community. This is a vital part of our work throughout 2022.

An outreach, communications and fundraising plan is to be prepared for roll out in early 2022 for how we both physically move and relocate as well as how we integrate into our new Headquarters.

The current services and programs will be thoughtfully examined ahead of and after the move, and up scaled/ revitalised where needed. Many of the courses we needed to logistically conduct off site can now be under the one roof. It is foreseen these courses will continue to be both educational and creative outlets for the reuse and recycling sector.

We will expand on our funding for such programs to include existing and new contributions through the grant sector; membership and donor outreach; as well as corporate and in kind donations.

Goal 2: Waste Reduction - Down to Zero

Our two key pathways to expand the reuse and waste reduction sector are through education and advocacy work. It remains a key part of our work to reduce waste and our environmental impact while supporting social causes.

Bower Education Hubs

We continually build on the Bower's capacity and expertise as an educational organisation to enhance our impact through diversifying our course curriculums and the availability of courses. We will look at new areas of reuse such as expanding our building materials, and textiles.

Key outcomes for 2022-27 include:

- Increase our in person and online practical learning courses for reuse and repair initiatives.
- Expand our bespoke production of furniture and reuse of materials
- Further partnerships with registered training organisations for vocational training options.

- Implement circular economy initiatives as provided through local, state, and federal government initiatives.
- Further develop partnerships with government, industry, and social enterprise.
- Increase our outreach beyond Sydney through social media and online platforms.
- Strategically examine if viable one to two options to increase Bower activities beyond the current sites in the Inner West and Parramatta.
- Look at partnerships to expand our fundraising base for running our program activities..

Advocacy for a Circular Economy

As a leading example of circular economy initiatives we will advocate for zero waste production to reduce landfill, halt incineration, to reduce the associated ecological footprint, and reduce GHG emissions such as methane production.

We will advocate for all levels of government legislation and initiatives for the Right to Repair and Zero waste production. We will participate in relevant government reviews, submissions, and implementation strategies. We recognise large scale change is needed to make a larger impact at the national level.

Key outcomes:

- A strident national Right to Repair legislation is passed, monitored, and promoted through our work and that of the waste sector
- The Bower's House to Home initiative has become a government funded program and viewed as a win for both the environment and the community.
- Political, economic and environmental targets are introduced by the state and federal government to stimulate reuse and buying of second hand goods and materials.
- Advocate/ develop partnerships with targeted businesses to implement their own targets for waste reduction, sustainability and social initiatives.

Goal 2: The Bower as a Social Enterprise Business Model

Bower Reuse and Repair centres are seen as reliable and reputable social enterprises based on proven programs.

The Bower in Phase 2 of the Strategic Plan, following our relocation, will implement a viable business model to expand our financial base and our operations. We need to diversify our fundraising base to continue good delivery of services such as our House To Home redistribution of goods; and our waste reduction and reuse initiatives; a shop front or pop up shop will also be examined.

We wish to increase our social services component of the Bower's work to outreach to communities in need such as those being (re)homed due to homelessness or eviction, domestic violence survivors, Aboriginal housing, and other key sectors. This will be a part of our outreach strategy in our new local area, and to increase the impact of our work in the Parramatta and surrounding area of Western Sydney.

Economic diversification is necessary for our growth where we measure our success through the triple bottom line of assessing environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Key outcomes:

- Assess and strengthen our relationships and services with the 21 Local Government Council areas in which we operate.
- Examine the services we provide to Councils and the cost benefit analysis of these.
- Examine in particular our relationships with Councils in which we have repair centers and repair cafes such as Inner West Council, City of Sydney, Parramatta Council, and across Greater Sydney.
- Partner with other local businesses in and around the Inner West of Sydney and Parramatta
- Partner with green businesses to further shared goals on environment, waste reduction, climate change, and social issues.
- Further relations and partnership with national business who will support the Bower's goals and growth.

Goal 3: The Bower as a Social and Environmental Communicator

We aim to draw stronger links with the day to day work of the Bower's operations with longer term goals and our social and environmental objectives and achievements.

The Bower will articulate an integrated marketing and communication strategy to tell the story of Bower's holistic approach of providing practical and technical solutions for reuse and repair and waste reduction. We will demonstrate the links between supporting people, building community, and reducing waste through our work on education, advocacy, repurposing and reuse of goods and materials.

We will articulate the link of these initiatives to the bigger picture of the urgency of climate change, deforestation, pollution, and environmental sustainability. Every workshop or education initiative we undertake reduces our ecological footprint and/or assists valuable social causes. The issues are intertwined and cannot be viewed in isolation.

Key outcomes:

- The Bower will implement an integrated communications and marketing strategy from early 2022 so as to roll this out by the HQ relocation and beyond.
- We will integrate our communications plan, rolled out across all current platforms and identify and assess other platforms not yet utilised.
- We will have consistent messaging between immediate and longer term goals for environmental and social impact recognising this is a unique role that the Bower can play.
- We link the social enterprise with our impact on waste reduction, local and global ecological issues, and social causes.
- We will innovate our online campaigns and platforms to appeal to build our online community.

Goal 4: Reducing the Footprint - Buying Pre-loved Goods and the Reuse of Materials

Looking at the life cycle of products we want to be able to offer repairs such as to electronic goods, furniture, and woodwork. We also promote pre-loved goods that are donated to us that

we then upcycle and resell at affordable prices or 'rehome' to those most in need. We reuse building materials such as for our tiny houses or bespoke goods that are discarded or would otherwise end up in landfill.

Key outcomes:

- We build a strong strategy around the sale of pre-loved goods on site our retail site to increase profit margins
- We ascertain if the expansion to other shop fronts is advantageous to pilot
- Our online sales become a key revenue raiser for the organisation linked to our online and social media strategy
- We increase the volume of pre-loved goods which are repaired or upcycled for sale
- Repair services are expanded at our new location to become a viable revenue stream
- Fundraising and grant writing capacity is strengthened to enable us to continue to diversify and expand our operations.

Goal 5: The Bower as a Centre of Innovation and Excellence

The Bower following the relocation of our HQ and building up of our key workshop sites such as at Redfern and Parramatta will expand on our successes and set us up for further growth over the next 4-5 years. Operational efficiency and systemisation are key elements for increasing our productivity while being cost effective.

Key outcomes:

- Annual targets for growth, for research and development, for staff development, KPIs, and incentives are routinely set.
- An advanced level of data collection and analysis is in place, equipping us with in-depth knowledge to inform investment and growth decision making.
- HR and WH&S policies and standard operational procedures are well established
- Staff recruitment, retention, training, and succession planning is embedded in policies and practice.
- We promote healthy creative workplaces and practices.
- We encourage innovation and good practice across every aspect of our work.

Conclusion

The Bower will be undertaking a period of change and growth through 2022. We will utilise this period to assess the best ways in which we can grow as an organisation both physically and in terms of innovation and best practice.

We recognise we cross both environmental and social causes through very practical hands-on operations that we need to actively promote and communicate.

To further the work that we do in Phase 2 we will reach out to new communities, businesses, and government. We will actively promote legislation initiatives to further waste reduction and reuse and repair initiatives. We will partner with organisations and business to deliver our services, further our education initiatives, and be a vital part of the living Circular Economy.

We look forward to the years ahead and our work as centres of innovation on waste, sustainability, and social impacts.

Annexes

Annex 1 Bower Risk Register

Risk description	Risk level (high/medium/low)	Mitigation
Clientele doesn't follow to new HQ location	Medium to High	Design marketing and outreach campaign to: a) encourage people to follow us to our new location b) build up our outreach and profile in the new area by engaging future clientele. c) Integrate into our new community d) Investigate pop up shop
Shortages of qualified facilitators	Low to Medium	Ongoing program to recruit, train, and retain facilitators including new facilitators for a diversified program.
Online competition and online sales do not expand	Medium	Strengthen our online communications strategy and messaging across all of our platforms. Implement a marketing strategy to increase online presence and online sales. Implement CRM for audience segmentation. Prioritise online sales and communications strategy.
House to Home funding not secured and/or program does not grow	Medium	Diversify our base from government funding to involve other sectors to financially contribute. Keep building on relations in social services and relevant not for profit sectors.
Outreach to the business sector is not diverse or widely adopted	Low	Start with local, sustainable, and well matched donors and corporations.
Revenue slows down	Medium	Expand fundraising activities and diversify our revenue streams. Continue to invest in R&D and diversity.
COVID impact to business and sales	High	Essential to expand to online sales and build up other revenue streams to not rely on in person shop sales.

