



2022 – 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

Living the Circular Economy

October 2021 - Updated November 2023

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 in zero waste production through the reclamation of household items and building materials for reuse and resale through reducing waste and 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 services; 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 to set up a new Reuse and Repair centre at Summer Hill where a waste and reuse hub will be created along with the Inner West Council. We will be consolidating our other centres from Zetland and Parramatta into the Summer Hill hub. We will also maintain our Marrickville store location at Addison Road Community Centre, and our workshop space at Redfern 107 in the City of Sydney local government area

The second phase is for our growth and expansion from the second half of 2023 to 26.

Goal 1: The Bower Reuse and Repair Centers (Phase 1)

A new site at the previous Summer Hill Depot has been outfitted in 2023 for us to commence operations from July 2023.

The Summer Hill depot allows our operations to expand both physically, due to a much-increased space, and also creatively. It is important for the Bower to remain in our community at Addison Road in Marrickville as well as settle into the waste and recovery centre at Summer Hill. We will continue to interact with our valued supporters and at the same time connect to Summer Hill and the surrounding community.

An outreach, communications and fundraising plan was prepared and implemented for the rollout in 2023. The plan included how we both physically move and relocate as well as how we integrate into our new Reuse and Repair Centre. We have moved all of the functions from the Zetland Electronics Repair Cafe and Parramatta Workshops to Marrickville, Redfern, and Summer Hill. In Parramatta, we will continue to work with the Council to undertake repair cafes and workshops but without our own designated workshop space.

The current services and programs will be thoughtfully examined after the move and into 2024, and upscaled/ revitalised where needed. Many of the courses we needed to logistically conduct off-site such as Tiny House courses, are now run under from our site at Summer Hill and have increased from one to four annually. 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 such as Youth networks, through the grant sector; membership and donor outreach; as well as commence outreach for 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 part of our work to reduce waste and our environmental impact while supporting social causes.

Bower Education Hubs

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

Key outcomes for 2022-27 include:

- Increase our in-person and practical learning courses for reuse and repair initiatives.
- Expand our bespoke production of furniture and reuse of materials
- Further partnerships for workshops including team building bespoke courses for organisations and companies alike
- 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 the viability of one to two projects such as the Festival of Repair to increase Bower activities and reach into the community.
- 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, reduce landfill, halt incineration, 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 continue to be an example of the Circular Economy across Sydney. We recognise large-scale change is needed to make a larger impact at the national level.

Key outcomes:

- The Bower's House to Home initiative receives government and private funding and is viewed as a win for both the environment and the community.
- Political, economic and environmental targets are introduced by local Councils, and state and federal governments to stimulate the reuse and buying of secondhand goods and materials.
- Advocate/ develop partnerships with targeted businesses for waste reduction, sustainability, and social initiatives.

Goal 3: 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 consolidation and expansion of Reuse and Repair Centers, 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; our shop and our presence will remain at Addison Road Community Center while a new shop, workshop space, tiny house workshop, electrical repairs, and house to home distribution are centred at Summer Hill.

We intend 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 for our Reuse and Repair Centers, and to increase the impact of our work in the Sydney Metropolitan area.

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 including repair cafes, workshops, collection and rehoming services.
- 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 the City of Sydney
- Partner with green businesses to further share goals on the environment, waste reduction, climate change, and social issues.
- Further relations and partnerships with national businesses which will support the Bower's goals and growth.

Goal 4: 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 to 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 communication and marketing strategy from early 2023 so as to roll this out at our Repair and Reuse Centres at Marrickville, Redfern and SummerHill and beyond.
- We will communicate 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 5: 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 such as street libraries, beehive boxes, or Aboriginal cultural boxes in cooperation with Gunawirra Aboriginal community organisation. These materials that are discarded would otherwise end up in landfills.

Key outcomes:

- We build a strategy around the sale of pre-loved goods on-site on our retail site to improve profit margins
- We continue the expansion to other bespoke items including to local government
- Our online sales are linked more closely 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 all locations and through local government initiatives
- Fundraising and grant writing capacity is strengthened to enable us to continue to diversify and expand our operations

Goal 6: The Bower as a Centre of Innovation and Excellence

The Bower's building up of our key workshop sites at Redfern and Summer Hill 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, research and development, staff development, and incentives are 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 operating procedures are well established
- Staff recruitment, retention, training, and succession planning are embedded in the organisation
- We promote healthy creative workplaces and practices
- We encourage innovation and good practice across all aspects of our work

Conclusion

The Bower will be undertaking a period of change and growth through 2023. 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 practices.

We recognise we cross both environmental and social causes through very practical hands-on operations that we need to actively promote and communicate across existing and new sectors of supporters.

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

We look forward to the next years ahead and our evolving 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 newSH 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) continue to maintain our store at Marrickville and revitalise it as some functions moving to Summer hill has created more space
Shortages of qualified facilitators	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 the 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 on business and sales	High	Essential to expand to online sales and build up other revenue streams to not rely on in-person shop sales.