

NEWSLETTER  
**REGROW RESPONSE**  
 LAKE CONJOLA & SURROUNDS



### Program Launch

**N**early a year after the 2019/2020 bushfires tore through the South Coast, 5000 plants have been delivered to residents in Conjola and surrounds to see Hope in Every Harvest.

With much of the recovery effort and recovery resources focused on personal wellbeing, rebuilding infrastructure and reviving businesses, Convoy of Hope identified a need for restoring people's gardens and community recreation spaces. It was through a conversation with Frank, a Conjola resident who lost his house and nursery business of 40 years in the fires that the idea came to 'seed'.

Convoy of Hope completed the first Regrow Response Plant-Drop in partnership with eleven schools and five garden clubs of the central coast.



Frank and Kevin reading beautiful hand written notes from the students at Inaburra School.



Students at Inaburra School loading their plants into the truck.

### Program Impact

What a joy it was to hear from the students on how the Regrow Response has substantially impacted their love of plants and compassion for the bush fire affected communities.

One child passionately shared his excitement that the program had made him want to be a gardener and work with plants when he grows up!





## Very First Plant Pick-Up

Since July, students across New South Wales cared for, nurtured, and watered their native plants. Some schools even fed their plants worm juice to keep them growing!

Our team picked up natives plants as excited students greeted us at their schools and eagerly loaded the native plants that they had nurtured for the past four months on to the truck. The students wrote beautiful cards of encouragement and decorated signs for the fire-affected residents of Conjola and Surrounds. The trays full of plants were ready to find new homes.

The Convoy of Hope team, residents, and school participants gathered for two presentation ceremonies that were full of sharing experiences from over the past few months. School student representatives spoke about their involvement in the Regrow Response and how it impacted their day-to-day lives. Residents shared what the plants meant to them and their gratitude to the school children for their kindness and generosity. Students and residents took part in a ceremonial planting of trees at Conjola Park and the Lake Conjola Community Centre. The entire event was a beautiful and emotional time for all present.

Following the event, residents wandered through the array of native plants to choose those they would be taking home. The locals also received soil to get started on planting their gardens.

## Regrow Response Participants

Convoy of Hope is so proud to have worked with each and every school to bring the Regrow Response to life! Thank you for your dedication and care to grow the tubestock to flourishing plants ready to be planted! A shout out of thanks to all our participants:

**Claremont College**  
**Garden Club Australia**  
**GyMEA North Public School**  
**Inaburra School**  
**Kings School**  
**Milton Public School**

**Newington College**  
**Nowra Anglican College**  
**Scots College**  
**St Mary's Star of the Sea Milton**  
**Ulladulla Public School**  
**Ulladulla High School**



Students from Claremont College delivering their natives.



A first grade class at Ulladulla Public School and the plants they cared for.



Students from Milton Public and Ulladulla High schools participating in the ceremonial planting at Lake Conjola



## Planting Hope

Tamati and Jarrah, students at a participating school, received their plants as tubestock when our team first dropped off plants to the schools. Little did they know, the very plants that they were repotting, watering and nurturing would end up being replanted on their own property. Their family property was damaged by the first of the fires to move through the area on December 3rd, 2019. They have been rebuilding ever since.



These two boys grew and learned about their plants alongside their classmates everyday. As we met the family on their property they showed us the plants they received, including plants from best friends and classmates. The two boys were enthusiastic about replanting their plants and can't wait to see them grow!



## Sprouting Community

At one of the plant drops we met John, a resident in the Conjola area. He lives in a community that was surrounded by the bushfires. John walked us around the area that he lives and told us stories of the fires and their lasting effects. On the south side of his community the fires were so hot that they killed all the vegetation around two ponds that had been landscaped just before the fires. Tree removalists only just cleared the devastation in late November, nearly 11 months after the fires.

John shared his gardening project with us in great detail as he shoveled soil that was provided for the residents. He explained that as the community started seeing the plants regrow and be replanted around the ponds there was a sense of hope coming back to the residents. The plants are helping others re-engage, connect and move forward within their community. They have started using the pond as a gathering place with chairs, tables and even a memorial stone in place. Plants from the Regrow Response have found their way around these ponds as well as in the gardens in the nearby resident's homes.

## Friendship Through Gardening

Meet Dot & Don. These two drove down to Conjola from the Central Coast of New South Wales to celebrate the community receiving nearly 5,000 native plants. Dot is a part of Garden Clubs Australia who donated 700 plants to the residents alongside the Regrow Response. When the club heard about the initiative they knew they had to get involved and we are all thankful for their generosity and can't wait to see the next group of plants for February!



To read more stories and to follow along with the ongoing Regrow Response go to:  
[convoyofhope.org.au/news/regrow-response/](https://convoyofhope.org.au/news/regrow-response/)

# REGROW RESPONSE

## LAKE CONJOLA & SURROUNDS



**W**e want to say a massive thank you to a few special supporters and volunteers. Without them the Regrow Response would not be possible. These organisations have contributed through finance, resource and time to help bring Regrow Conjola to life.

- Australian Christian Channel**
- Bunnings Ulladulla**
- Caltex Refinery Kurnell**
- Cliff Lewis Printing**
- Convoy of Hope Donors & Supporters**
- Commonwealth bank**
- Karen Lissa** - Conjola resident extraordinaire

- The Garden Club of Australia, Central Coast**
- Groundswell Church**
- Harvest Seed Nursery Terrey Hills**
- Mullala Nursery Ulladulla**
- Qube Logistics**
- Soil Co Nowra**
- St Vincent de Paul**



The Harvest Seed Nursery team in Terrey Hills helping us load the first load of tubestock onto the truck.



Tony from Soil Co donated 32 cubic meters of top soil for Conjola residents to plant their pot plants into the ground.



Groundswell Church volunteered on the plant pick up days with barbeques as well as set up and tear down.



Karen, our Conjola resident extraordinaire, helped at every step of this process and we're so thankful for her!

Don't forget to share your story using the **#RegrowResponse** hashtag and tag us on social media **@convoyofhopeau**