

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CIRCULAR THINKING
 TREE PLANTING, BUILDING DONATION AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability in infrastructure delivery is more than carbon and water savings. At the Moss Vale Train Station and Stabling Yard Upgrade, Degnan created lasting community benefit through a community tree planting day and the donation of a disused facility building, delivering environmental, social and circular economy outcomes beyond construction.

The Tree Planting Day: Carbon, Ecology and Community in One Initiative

Construction activities required vegetation removal within the project footprint, triggering offset obligations under TfNSW’s Sustainable Design Guidelines. Rather than relying on a traditional landscaping programme, Degnan partnered with Wingecarribee Shire Council and Transport for NSW to create an approach that delivered required offsets while generating meaningful community outcomes.

Degnan coordinated a community tree planting day at Anembo Park in Moss Vale, timed to align with optimal seasonal conditions and Council operations. A total of 433 trees were donated and sourced through Welby Garden Centre, a social enterprise operated by Challenge Southern Highlands, creating both environmental and social value through local employment opportunities.

More than 400 trees were planted across three Moss Vale sites with participation from over 60 volunteers, including students, teachers, community groups, disability employment providers, environmental organisations and Council representatives. The scale and diversity of participation created genuine community ownership while delivering lasting environmental outcomes.

Environmental Accounting

The tree planting programme delivered a threefold environmental outcome. The first 67 trees met the project’s required vegetation offset obligations. A further 130 trees were used to offset construction energy and embodied carbon emissions in lieu of carbon credits, in line with the project’s sustainability framework agreed with TfNSW. The remaining trees exceeded contractual requirements, reflecting Degnan’s commitment to improving local environmental outcomes.

The 130 carbon offset trees are projected to sequester approximately 189 tCO₂e over their lifetime, contributing to a total project reduction of 592 tCO₂e. By replacing abstract carbon credits with locally planted trees, the project ensured a visible, verifiable and community-based offset.

Sourcing trees from a local nursery further reduced transport emissions, while planting within local parklands ensured ecological benefits remained within the region.



Volunteers included students and staff from Robertson Public School, Moss Vale High School and Public School



Shed donated to Moss Vale High School for use by their Sports Department



Trees were sourced from Welby Garden Centre, operated by Challenge Southern Highlands, adding a social sustainability dimension to the tree planting initiative

Circular Economy in Practice: Shed Donation

When an expanded scope of works at the stabling yard required replacement of the existing staff presentation building, Degnan identified an opportunity to avoid the standard demolition and disposal pathway.

The existing 12x3-metre shed had been in use by Sydney Trains staff for over 20 years and still had significant service life. Degnan proposed relocating the structure to Moss Vale High School.

The shed was carefully lifted and transferred to the school grounds, with students observing the operation from a safe vantage point, creating an informal STEM learning opportunity. It now serves as an information office and amenities facility for sporting events, providing long-term functional value to the school and wider community

The relocation diverted the entire structure from landfill, contributing to the project’s 98.7% construction waste diversion rate. It also avoided the embodied carbon associated with new construction and demolition activities.

Beyond environmental outcomes, the donation delivered lasting social value by providing a community facility at no cost, strengthening local relationships during a period of construction disruption centre.

Aligned Procurement: Sourcing from Social Enterprise

The decision to source the 433 donated trees from Challenge Southern Highlands is a well-regarded local organisation, and the procurement decision ensured that Degnan’s spend on offset trees generated employment outcomes within the very community the project was serving.

This approach is consistent with Degnan’s broader sustainable procurement framework, which requires consideration of environmental, social and economic criteria in all procurement activities, and which evaluates suppliers on their sustainability credentials as part of the tender process.

KEY OUTCOMES

COMMUNITY



433 Trees Planted with the help of involving **60+** community volunteers
 Vegetation offset obligations met through community engagement

ENVIRONMENT



189 tCO₂e Lifetime Carbon Sequestration
 Shed Diverted from landfill for reuse
 Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) Platimun Rating

SOCIAL VALUE



Trees sourced from a local social enterprise generating employment outcomes

Together, these initiatives show that a project’s sustainability legacy is shaped just as much by off-site decisions and community engagement as by technical design. Degnan’s approach at Moss Vale provides a replicable model for community-centred sustainability delivery on future TfNSW projects.