

3.3. Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability Update

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ATTACHMENTS: Nil

Nil

PURPOSE:

To provide an overview of the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability activities over the last six months, as well as a projection of activities for the next six months.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report includes a brief synopsis of Coal Loader activity including education, events, tours, site activities and other activations, as well as a projection of planned activities over the period.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability Activities report be noted.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Our Living Environment

- 1.1 Protected, enhanced and biodiverse natural environment
- 1.2 Environmentally sustainable community
- 1.3 Clean and green places
- 1.4 Well utilised open space and recreational facilities

2. Our Built Infrastructure

- 2.1 Infrastructure and assets meet diverse community needs
- 2.2 Vibrant public domains and villages

4. Our Social Vitality

- 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe
- 4.2 A centre for creativity and learning
- 4.3 North Sydney's history is preserved and recognised

5. Our Civic Leadership

- 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

BACKGROUND

The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability is the 'sustainability hub' of North Sydney, offering a diverse array of programs and events including a major events portfolio, school and tertiary engagement, a heritage tour program, facilitated third-party event management, a number of volunteer programs, indigenous engagement and a number of other activations throughout the year. The Coal Loader is also home to two community gardens (including aquaponics and chickens), the native bushcare nursery and well-maintained bush and parkland.

A busy public open space, the Coal Loader attracts constant visitation from all over Sydney and beyond and is well set up for self-guided tours through the augmented reality app as well as the digital kids' trail.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

DETAIL

A snapshot of Coal Loader activities over the last six months:

Coal Loader Education Program

The Coal Loader plays host to regular school and tertiary education activities through:

- Self guided excursions utilizing the Coal Loader Sustainability Learning Guide;
- Facilitated school excursions for both North Sydney and non-North Sydney schools from stage 2 and up (both Primary and Secondary);
- Customised tertiary learning experiences (through partner Universities and NSW Tafe).

Over the last six months, there have been:

- 5 facilitated primary school excursions;
- 8 facilitated secondary school excursions;
- 4 facilitated tertiary engagements.

The Coal Loader also hosted the Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre's Primary School Sustainability Expo, with around 150 students from eight different schools participating in a full day of sustainability activities led by high school students.

Coal Loader Events Program

The Coal Loader Events Program is designed to provide a mix of large-scale community focused events, smaller activations, ongoing engagement series, and sustainability-focused workshops. Over the last six months The Coal Loader has hosted around 80 events including 65 free-ticketed and 15 non-ticketed activations. Activities included two Artisans Markets (held quarterly for an audience of up to 10,000), a three-week long Salon de Refuse art saving and re-homing activation, weekly Wednesday Wellness sessions (held from September to April annually), four Indigenous talks and workshops, three seasonal cooking classes, monthly Sunset Session pop-up bars (December to March), a week-long exhibition of amateur artwork inspired by The Coal Loader and the Plastic Free July tea and talk.

Coal Loader Guided Tours

A tour guide program operates throughout the year incorporating both bi-monthly Saturday tours and private tours for group bookings of ten or more. This is a completely volunteer led program co-ordinated by Coal Loader staff with an average of 1-2 private tours per month taking place.

The Coal Loader also puts on free quarterly aboriginal cultural tours, alternating leads between the Aboriginal Heritage Office and Koori Kinnections. These tours are family friendly and almost always book out, giving the opportunity to around 100 people a year to learn about the indigenous cultural value of the site.

The Coal Loader hosts regular corporate bookings throughout the year and most of these – along with other corporate groups coming to the Coal Loader for training/staff development etc – request a site tour focusing on history, adaptive re-use and sustainability.

Coal Loader Venue Hire

The Coal Loader has multiple hireable spaces including The Platform, Tunnel One, The Genia McCaffery Centre for Sustainability, Mess Hall, and various transitional spaces, offering a unique environment that appeals to a diverse range of users.

Venue hire opportunities include public exhibitions, conferences, musical performances, awards nights, presentations, filming, product launches, fashion events, community classes, social groups, sporting events, professional training and more. The last period saw Tunnel 1 activated with the Sydney Claymakers Exhibition (over 5,000 visitors in three days) and live Shakespeare performances, while the Genia McCaffery Sustainability Centre and the Mess Hall hosted a multitude of bookings including a weekly seniors art class, several corporate events and team building activations.

Other projects

The Coal Loader partnered with the Sea Heritage Foundation Board, TAFE NSW and the Prince’s Trust Australia to roll out the first Indigenous Maritime Operations certificate 1 General Purpose Hand course for indigenous students. The six students completed the theoretical component of their course at the Coal Loader and the practical component on the Cape Don. All six students completed the course and have gone on to find employment.



The Coal Loader Christmas Artisan Market



Sunset Sessions



The Sketchbook Challenge



Indigenous Tours



Third party events

The next six months for the Coal Loader:

Display room upgrade

The Coal Loader is home to a display room in the Genia McCaffery Centre for Sustainability which is open to the public six days a week. A concept for the re-refresh of this display room is currently being developed and will include homage to both indigenous and industrial heritage, sustainability education and interactive displays.

The first 'addition' to the display room will be the acquisition of a large, to-scale model of the ship loader that operated at the Coal Loader, built and donated by the original design engineer. The 'unveiling' of the model will take place during April in celebration of Heritage Month.

Community engagement/business planning

A business plan needs to be developed for the Coal Loader to provide strategic direction for the site for the next five years. Stage one of this business plan development is to undertake a community engagement exercise seeking stakeholder views. A community engagement plan is currently being developed.

Infrastructure upgrades/facilities management

Two IT projects are currently underway, being an upgrade to the WIFI system at the Coal Loader (to include WIFI access in Tunnel 1 for the first time) and an upgrade to the people counting system. Proposals for both systems are currently being assessed by Coal Loader and IT staff.

A number of other facility upgrades have taken place over the last six months including upgraded commercial cooking equipment to the Mess Hall (induction cooking and a water efficient dishwasher), new signage for the Cottage community garden and chicken coop and new bench seats.

The Coal Loader Café

The previous tenants of the Coal Loader Café went into liquidation and unexpectedly did not return after Christmas. New tenants are currently being sought. During the closure the kitchen equipment will be electrified to remove the last remaining gas usage onsite.

Upcoming events

The next six months will be busy as always at the Coal Loader with the final Sunset Sessions (pop up bar), Wednesday Wellness (weekly wellness sessions), the Autumn and Winter Artisan Markets, Heritage Month and of course, the biggest event of the year: the Living Futures Festival:



Living Futures comprises of a week long talk series culminating in a full day festival activation at the Coal Loader on April 30.