

### **3.3. Coal Loader Future Directions Survey Report**

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Coal Loader Future Directions 2023 - Community Engagement Strategy [3.3.1 - 4 pages]
2. Coal Loader Future Directions Survey Report 2023 [3.3.2 - 13 pages]

**PURPOSE:**

This report provides an overview of results from the Coal Loader Future Directions Survey that took place from March to June 2023.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- Coal Loader Future Directions Survey took place between 16 March and 13 June 2023. The survey sought community feedback on what to see, do and experience at the Coal Loader.
- The survey was run on Council's Your Say page and promoted to key stakeholder groups, local and regional community, education institutions, user groups and the general public.
- The survey received high participation with a total of 511 valid submissions.
- Results showed most people come to the Coal Loader to relax and connect to nature, attend educational workshops and events, learn about sustainability, and appreciate the history and heritage.
- Results from the survey will be used for future business planning at the Coal Loader.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Budget has been allocated within Council's environment levy to fund Coal Loader programs.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** the Coal Loader Future Directions Survey Report be received.

## **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

### **4. Our Social Vitality**

- 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe
- 4.3 North Sydney's history is preserved and recognised

## **BACKGROUND**

The Coal Loader Sustainability Centre is a heritage listed public open space, incorporating several operations including environmental education initiatives, community sustainability activities, venue hire, third party activation, events and sustainable technology showcasing.

An updated business plan for the Coal Loader is being developed to guide the operations of the Centre through to 2026, to meet the demands of both our local and regional community. After the change in social routine post-covid, a community consultation exercise is important to gauge community expectations and provide the opportunity to obtain public feedback on future operations at the Coal Loader.

## **CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Community engagement has occurred in accordance with Council's *Community Engagement Protocol*.

## **DETAIL**

A community engagement strategy was developed in liaison with Council's community engagement team and the resulting survey was run for approximately three months through North Sydney Your Say.

The Community Engagement Strategy (see Attachment 1), identified the following groups to engage with in the local community:

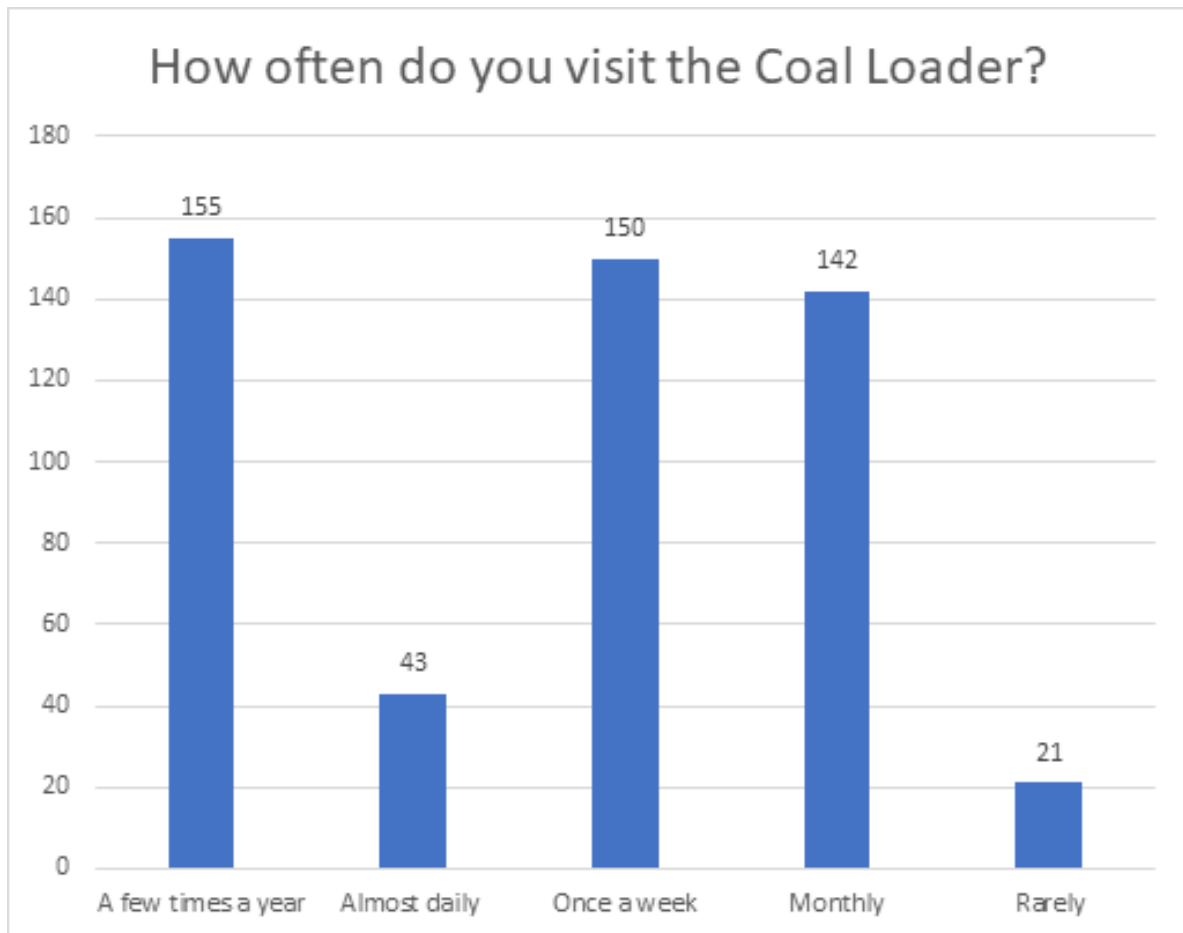
- The Coal Loader community – gardening volunteers, allotment gardeners, venue users, workshop and event participants

- Local community including precinct groups.
- Regional community.
- Educational institutions - schools, universities and TAFE.
- All demographics – young people, parents, seniors, people with a disability, indigenous people.
- Community groups - North Shore Mums, Streets Alive, Waverton Hub.
- Industry partners - Northern Sydney Environmental Educators Network, Aboriginal Heritage Office, Department of Education.

Key Communication Messages of the Survey included:

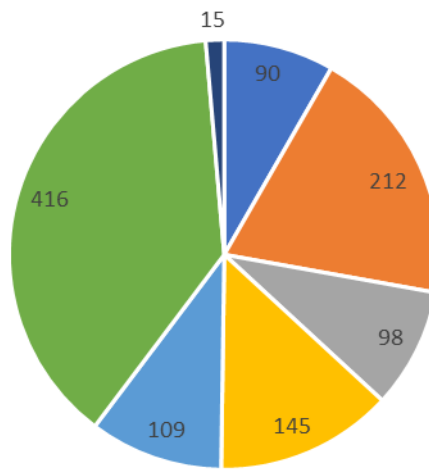
- An updated business plan is being developed for the Coal Loader Sustainability Centre.
- The community are invited to provide feedback on what kind of activities, activations, events, programs and projects they would like to see at the Coal Loader.
- Feedback will be incorporated into the Coal Loader Business Plan and used to plan future activities at the Centre 2023 - 2026.

Some key survey findings are presented below, and the full report can be found in Attachment 2.



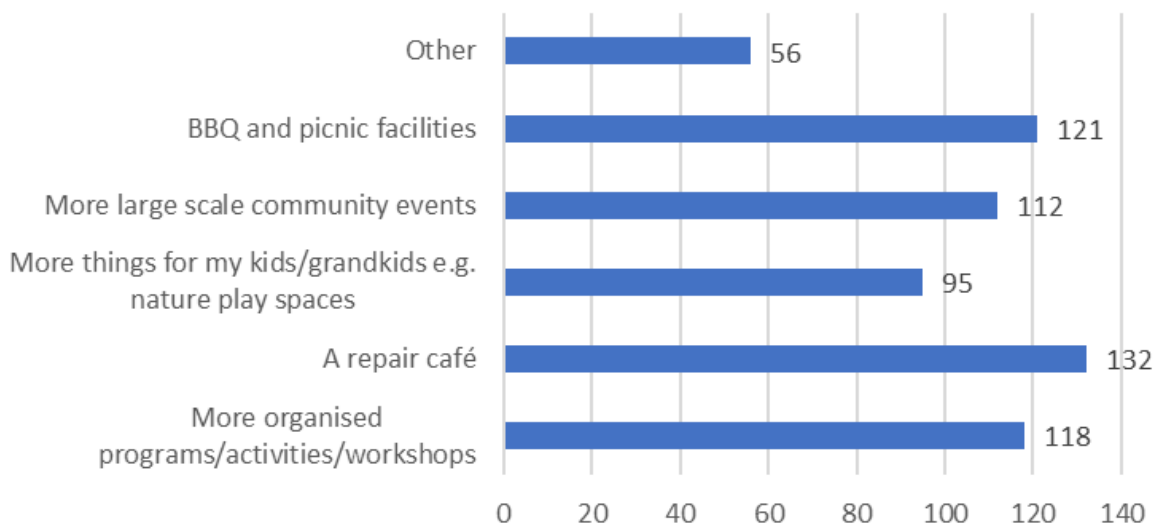


### I see the Coal Loader primarily as



- An extension of my backyard
- An exercise arena
- A place for learning and education
- Other
- A meeting place and place to connect
- A sustainability hub and technology showcase
- An open space and parkland for everyone

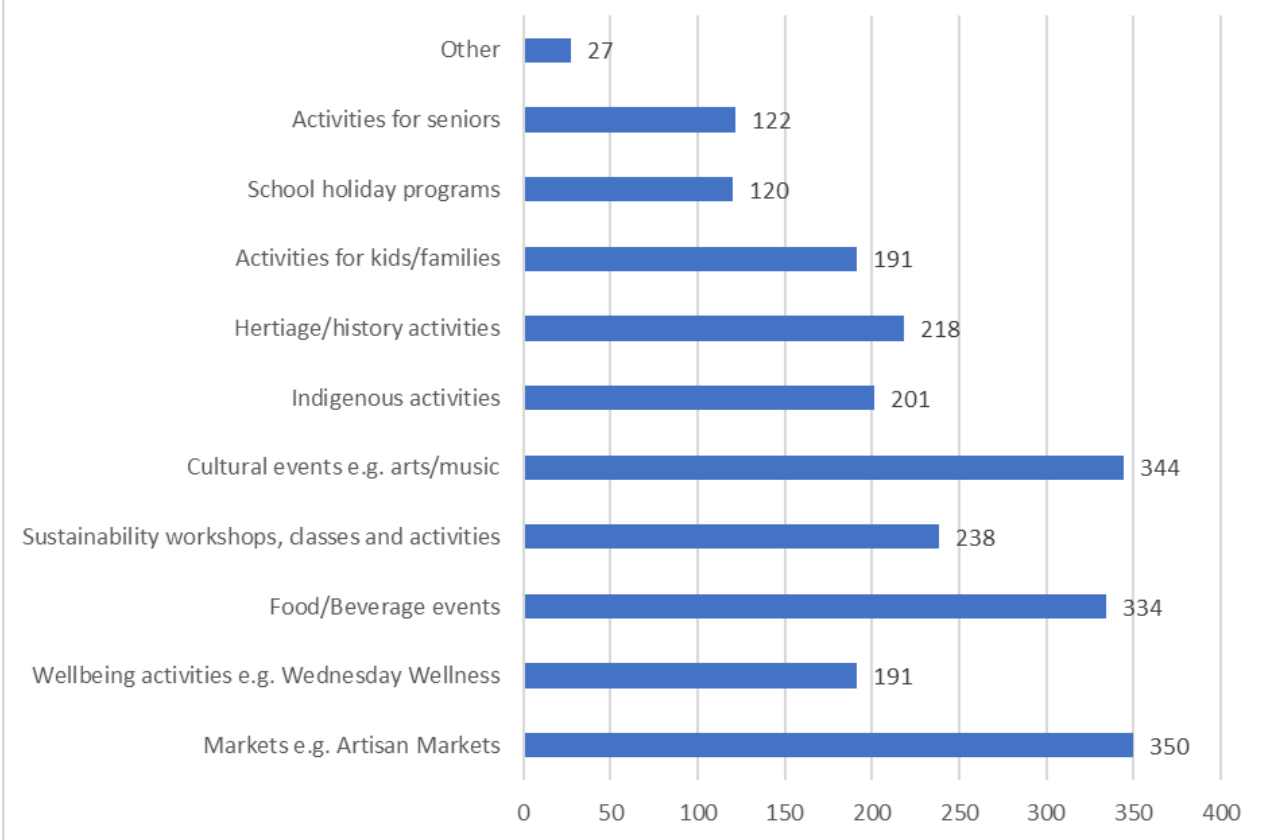
### What else would you like to see at the Coal Loader?



Of the 56 who selected other, café was the most predominant word followed by shade:



What kind of events would you like to see at the Coal Loader (tick all that apply)?



Survey findings have already been integrated into the 23/24 Coal Loader Events and Engagement Program. As a direct result of this survey, a new school holiday program and pre-school program have been implemented to address the gap for younger families. In addition, a new sustainability learning series, “Imperfectly Sustainable”, has also been introduced in response to the need for more workshops.

23/24 will see the delivery of two large scale events in addition to the long running Coal Loader Artisan markets, these being Loader Lights and the North Sydney Living Futures Sustainability Festival, and a Repair Café is currently being scoped for inclusion at the site.

The Coal Loader Business Plan is currently under development with these survey results forming a basis for decision making.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



# Coal Loader Future Directions 2023

Prepared March 2023

North Sydney Council is committed both in principle and in practice, to engaging on matters affecting the North Sydney community. Councils are required under the *Local Government Act 1993* to inform the community of particular issues that potentially affect their way of life.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this project-specific Community Engagement Strategy is to outline the ways stakeholders can be involved in the business planning process for the Coal Loader Sustainability Centre. Council is committed to engaging the community to ensure that the Coal Loader is meeting our community needs in terms of the events, workshops and activations we deliver, as well as the projects and programs we design.

### 1.1 Council's Community Engagement Protocol

This Engagement Strategy has been prepared in accordance with Council's *Community Engagement Protocol*. The Protocol is used to determine the level of 'level(s) of impact' applicable to this project/decision (proposal). Community engagement opportunities will be provided across a range of 'engagement' levels. This proposal has been determined as:

LEVEL OF IMPACT	LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT
Low	Consult

Council used the framework shown below in Table 1.1 to select the most appropriate 'level(s) of engagement' for this proposal to ensure an appropriate range of engagement 'levels' and methods are offered:

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Inform	Providing balanced and objective information to help the community understand problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions
Consult	Obtain public feedback on alternatives and/or decisions
Involve	Work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution

Table 1.1 Derived from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum



## **Coal Loader Future Directions 2023 Community Engagement Strategy**

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### **2. Background**

The Coal Loader Sustainability Centre is a heritage listed public open space, incorporating several operations including events, community activities, venue hire, third party activation, education and sustainable technology showcasing.

An updated business plan for the Coal Loader is being developed to guide the operations of the Centre through to 2026, to meet the demands of both our local and regional community. After the change in social routine post-covid, a community consultation exercise is important to gauge community expectations and provide the opportunity to obtain public feedback on future operations at the Coal Loader.

### **3. Community Engagement Strategy**

#### **3.1 Who are our community stakeholders?**

The Community Engagement Strategy identifies the following groups to engage with in the local community:

- The Coal Loader community – gardening volunteers, plot gardeners, venue users, event participants
- Local community
- Regional community
- Educational institutions e.g. schools, universities and TAFE
- All demographics – young people, parents, seniors, people with a disability, indigenous people
- Community groups e.g. North Shore Mums, Streets Alive, Waveton Hub
- Industry e.g. Northern Sydney Environmental Educators Network, Aboriginal Heritage Office

#### **3.2 Key Communication Messages**

- An updated business plan is being developed for the Coal Loader Sustainability Centre
- The community are invited to provide feedback on what kind of activities, activations, events, programs and projects they would like to see at the Coal Loader
- Feedback will be incorporated into the Coal Loader Business Plan and used to plan future activities at the Centre 2023 - 2026

#### **3.3 Timetable**

The main component of this exercise is a survey, which will run from Tuesday 21/3/23 to Monday 1 May 2023.

## Coal Loader Future Directions 2023 Community Engagement Strategy

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### 3.3.1 Phase 1 - Research/Scoping

This phase will involve identifying the key operations of the Coal Loader requiring direction, in order to design the survey to acquire the right information.

*March 2023*

### 3.3.2 Phase 2 - Survey Open

Between 21/03/23 and 01/05/23 Council will undertake various promotional activities to encourage as many people as possible to fill in the online survey. These will include:

- Copy in North Sydney News;
- Putting posters up around the site with promoting the survey with a QR code so visitors can complete the survey on their phones;
- Putting an ipad in the display room where people can complete the survey on the spot;
- Social media – both NSC and Coal Loader;
- Targeted advertising – e.g. ad in North Shore Mums;
- Promotion at the Living Futures Festival;
- Targeted mail outs to industry contacts e.g. gardening group, NSEEN, AAEE, library distribution list, community services distribution list, arts and culture distribution list, TSLot;
- Special Coal Loader EDM, Green Events EDM, North Sydney EDM.

*The survey will run Tuesday 21/3/23 to Monday 1 May 2023*

At the end of Phase 2 a summary of consultations outcomes (raw data) will be produced.

### 3.3.2 Phase 3 - Finalising Report

This Phase involves putting together a report which summarizes the key findings of the survey. This report will then be used as a basis for the business planning for the Coal Loader.

*Report to be completed by mid-May 2023 with business planning to commence immediately after (to be completed by mid-June 2023).*

*Please note a 23/24 operational plan will have been completed before then which will tie into the Business Plan for 23-26.*

## Coal Loader Future Directions 2023 Community Engagement Strategy

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### 4. Opportunity Cost/Rationale

Engaging the community in this proposal may entail financial costs to Council to achieve a high-quality engagement process. If the process is robust, community ownership of the decisions made will ensure efficient outcomes. Insufficient or poor quality engagement can result in poor long-term decisions requiring further resources to rectify. The aim of a high quality community engagement process is to make sustainable decisions. The engagement process will help Council staff and/or Councillors to understand the related recommendations rationale.

### 5. Further Information

For further information please contact Council's Coordinator Coal Loader Sustainability Centre, Leonie Netting.

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Website: [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au)

## Coal Loader Future Direction Survey Report



The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability is the heart of Waverton and the crown jewel of North Sydney Council. A heritage listed, ex-industrial site with a rich indigenous and industrial history, the Coal Loader is now a large public open space for the local and wider community to enjoy. It's a place to learn, to relax, to connect with people and with nature, to exercise, to socialise and to be inspired.

Between 16 March and 13 June 2023 North Sydney Council ran a survey in order to create the space that meets our community's needs. The survey requested participants to tell us what they want to see, do and experience at the Coal Loader so we can make it happen. There was also an incentive (win one of five x \$50 gift cards) for completing the survey.

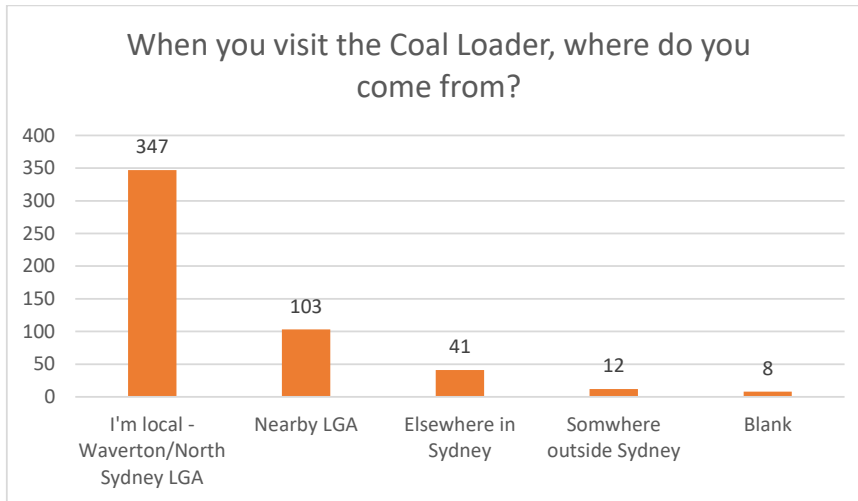
The survey received high participation with 511 valid contributions.

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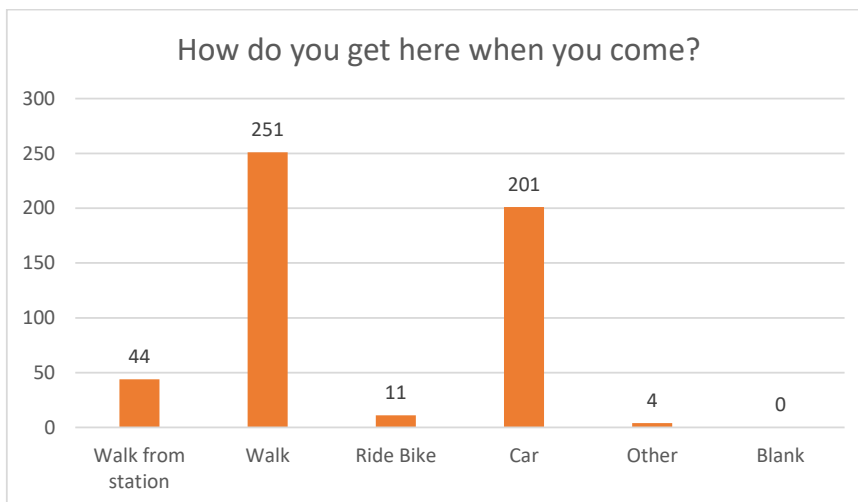
When you visit the Coal Loader, where do you come from?

The majority of survey participants were from the local area:



How do you get here when you come?

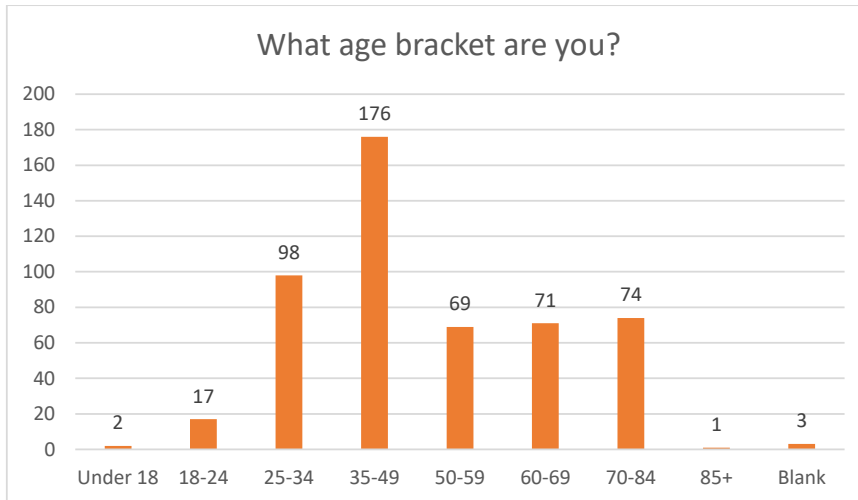
The majority of visitors who participated in the survey get to the Coal Loader by walking or car. One other response which was unique from the options provided was that they ran to the site:



- Others:
- I run there from my home
  - I walk from the bus stop on Pacific Highway
  - Bus to Woolies then walk
  - I walk from the McMahons Point wharf

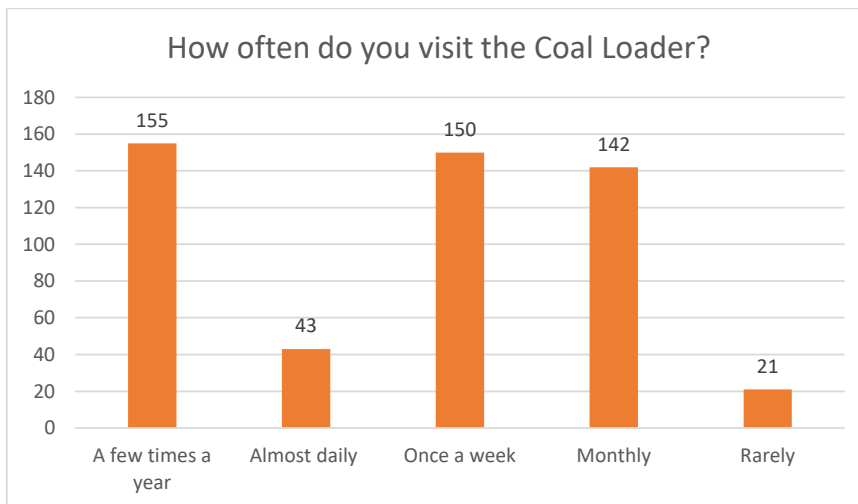
### What age bracket are you?

The majority of participants in the survey were between the ages of 35 and 49 with 25 to 34 years old being the second largest group:



### How often do you visit the Coal Loader?

People tend to visit the Coal Loader regularly, with the majority coming either at least once a week or monthly:



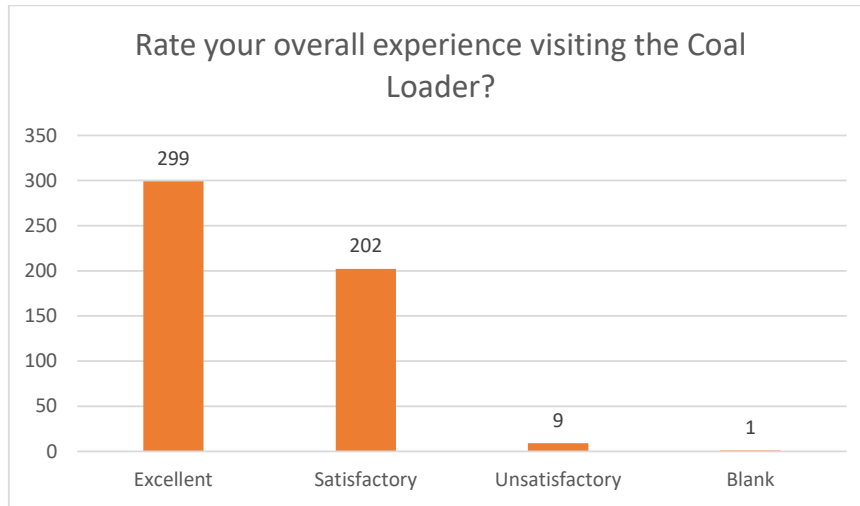






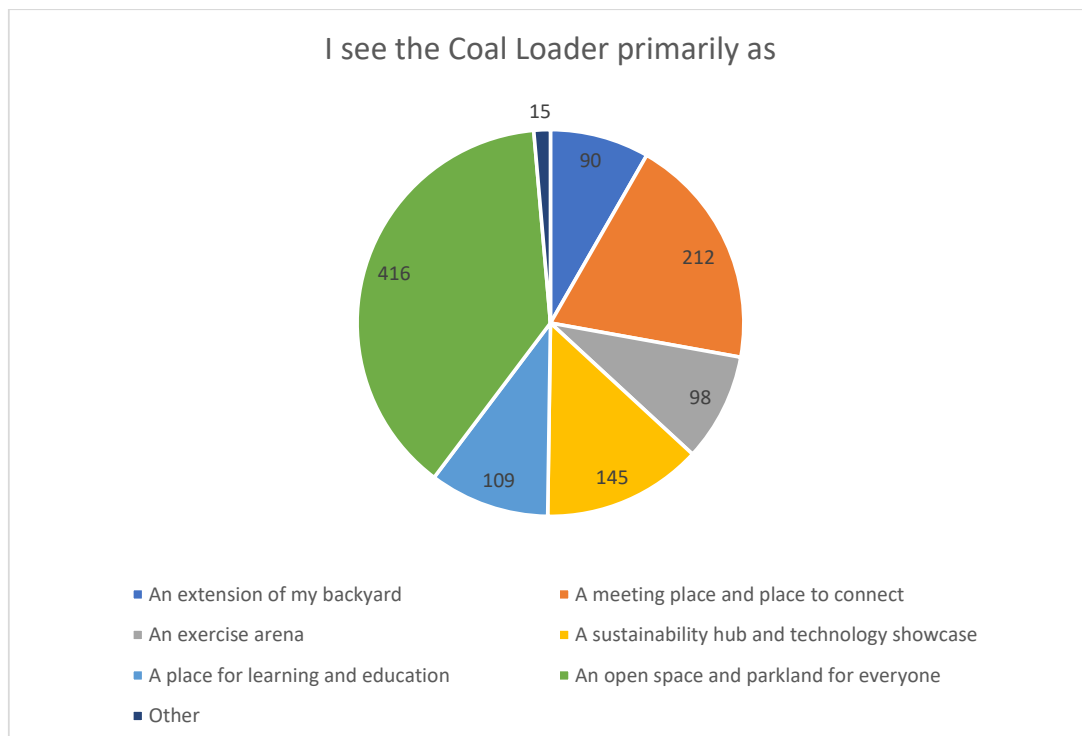
Rate your overall experience visiting the Coal Loader?

Experience of the Coal Loader was rated highly:

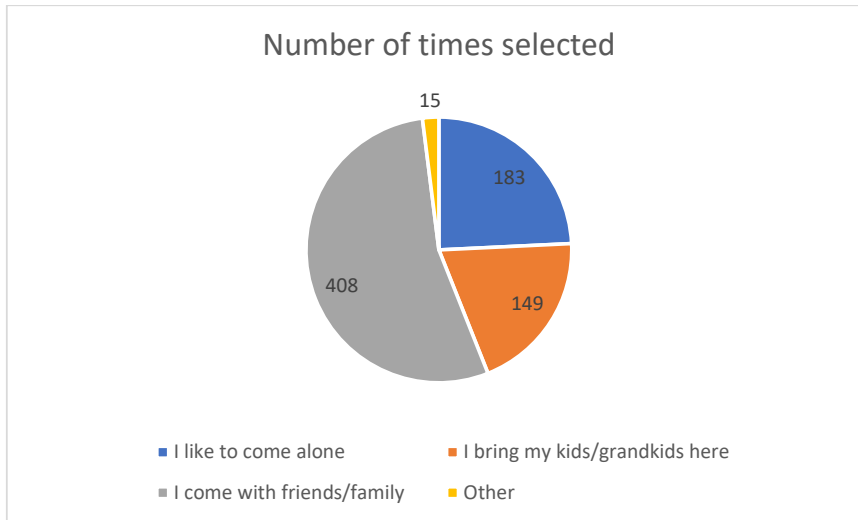


I see the Coal Loader primarily as:

Respondents primarily saw the Coal Loader as 'an open space and parkland for everyone' with 'a meeting place and place to connect' being the second primary response:





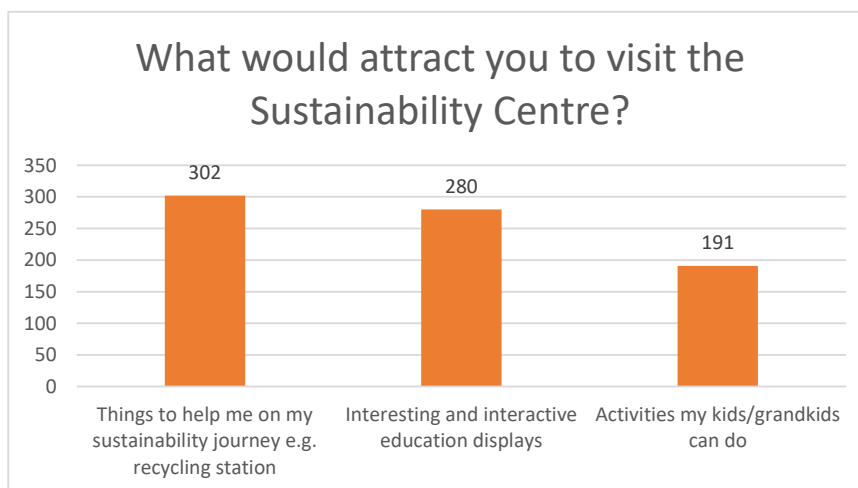


frequency	Word
3	dog
2	visitors
2	group
2	cafe
2	volunteers



What would attract you to visit the Sustainability Centre?

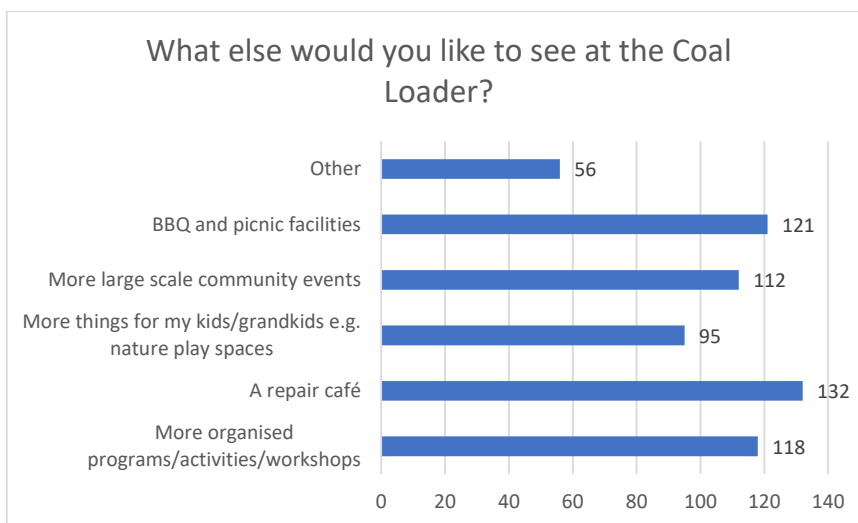
Sustainability is the driving attraction at the Coal Loader:

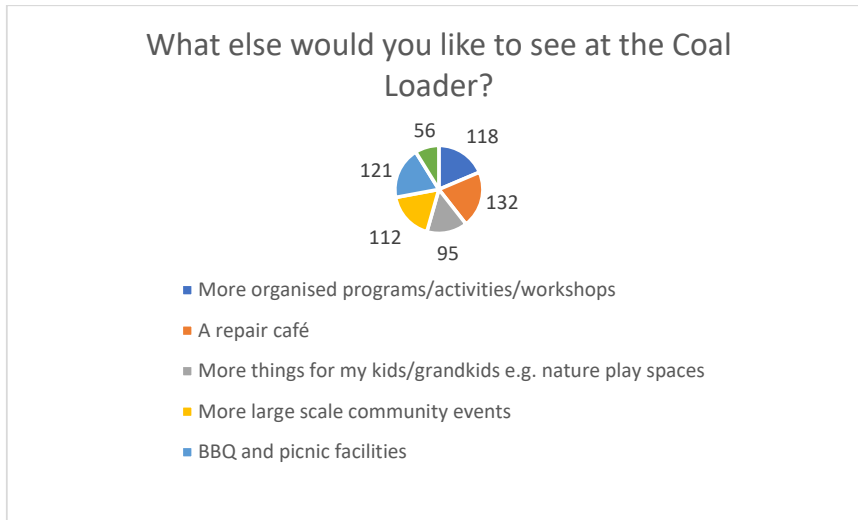




#### What else would you like to see at the Coal Loader?

This question was accidentally deleted during the survey’s open time but there were still 284 respondents for this question. Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple answers for this question and a Repair Café had the most selections:





Of the 56 who selected other, café was the most predominant word followed by shade:

Frequency	Word
13	cafe
8	shade
5	areas
5	space
4	platform
4	food
4	love
4	open
3	shaded
3	seating
3	harbour
3	bar
3	coal
3	loader
3	unique
3	sydney
3	events
3	park
3	top





Please tell us any suggestions or ideas as to how we can improve the Coal Loader  
Below are all the responses we received when asking for suggestions. There were 296 respondents to this call for suggestions. Below is a random sample:

Kids playground, more shaded/covered areas. Improved access (more parking or shuttle from train station).
Bring in a coffee cart. Collection point for arnies recon, repair cafe, group exercise classes, organised walks
I think it's great - can't think of anything - I always feel happy when I go there
MAP - WHAT TO DO
I really love having the Coal Loader in my neighbourhood. It is such a fantastic place to breathe out and soak up the natural environment. It feels like a hidden oasis so close to the city. It is a great place for bringing the community together.
Coal loader would be a lovely place for art residency program to attract more artists, hold exhibitions and workshops to the community. Current space provided is not really suitable, too cold in winter, too dusty when windy as it is not really a sealed room.
Get rid of the wharf
for organised outdoor functions - a mini bus service from Waverton railway station - to run 1 hour before concert start and for 1 hour after concert ended
Make the cafe bigger
More shaded areas
We'd love to have a cafe operating again
Just keep out low key and just a natural area to relax
More shade structure - the top of the coal loader can get very hot and there are minimal canopy coverage
Shuttle bus service from Waverton station on weekends and for major events so it is accessible for all without too many cars. Accessible connection to Berry's Bay when that is redeveloped. Pre-arranged pick up and drop off TSLot items at Sustainability Centre at times other than Sat morning. Signs with actual words, not just QR codes. Let the old pier go down gracefully and maybe rebuild later. Don't just put a stump there. Would love to have South Steyne where old Barragoola was. Use her for exhibits/events and don't let her sink! (Maybe Council has no control over that).
I know it's great to have activities, but it's also wonderful to just have some "free space" I love the piano being there. Maybe a few seats with backs in them (on the platform) for those of us who need a bit more support.
Improve the footpath from Waverton. A gravel path is "nice" aesthetically but totally impractical as it washes out and is downright dangerous. The paved side is ok but not great.
Activities for mums and bubs would be lovely.
less helicopters
Improve the Shaded areas - there is little shade and almost no proper seating Toilet facilities are woeful - school groups queue with about 20 kids for 2 small toilets near the cafe. They are not regularly maintained and need urgent expansion
Lots more shade please. The Coal Loader has been described as "A Bunnings car park" with all the concrete
Make the library of things a bigger space that can be perused in person; also a sustainability oriented cafe using local produce; more frequent markets
A good cafe serving quality food/coffee
More parent friendly activities. There are many new mothers in Waverton and surrounds. The coal loader is perfect for mothers group. What about Rhyme Time or story time at the coal loader? Also, mothers need coffee...please open the cafe again pronto!

