



AGENDA

A meeting of the **Environment Reference Group** will be held on Cammeraygal Land at the Ros Crichton Pavilion Council Chambers, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney at 7:00 PM on Tuesday 5 September 2023.
The agenda is as follows.

Therese Manns
GENERAL MANAGER



North Sydney Council is an Open Government Council. The records of Council are available for public viewing in accordance with this policy, with the only exception being made for certain confidential documents such as legal advice, matters required by legislation not to be divulged, and staff matters.

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1. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 May 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

2. Disclosures of Interest

3. Committee Reports

3.1. The Sydney Library of Things Progress Report

AUTHOR: Danielle Birkbeck, A/Manager Environmental Services

ENDORSED BY: Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment

ATTACHMENTS:

1. TSLoT infographic July 2023 [3.1.1 - 1 page]

PURPOSE:

This report provides an update and overview of The Sydney Library of Things operations, following the end of the trial period in June 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The *Sydney Library of Things* (TSLoT) began operations at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability in November 2021. It provides a volunteer run library of tools and other household equipment that may be borrowed by members of the community. The trial period ran from November 2021 through to June 2023.
- There are currently 25 volunteers and 96 memberships to the library.
- There are 277 items that can be borrowed, and 755 loans have been made over the trial period.
- It is anticipated that the lease for Workshop 2 at the Coal Loader be extended for a further 2 years following Council approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial implications are minor and are funded through Council's allocated Coal Loader or Property budgets depending on the nature of the request.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** that the report on the *Sydney Library of Things* is 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
 - 1.4 Well utilised open space and recreational facilities

4. Our Social Vitality
 - 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe

BACKGROUND

In February 2021, Council endorsed the establishment of a volunteer run, not for profit, community tool library also known as a library of things. These libraries operate much like traditional libraries; however, members can borrow items such as power drills, sewing machines, electric whipper snippers, party catering kits, camping equipment, marquees and much more. The libraries aim to reduce the purchase of new but often rarely used items in the local community, promote the share economy and in turn reduce resource use and eventual waste to landfill.

As a result, The Sydney Library of Things (TSLoT) was established at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability, with the view to open in July 2021. However, COVID lockdowns in the second half of 2021, meant that opening was delayed until November of that year.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

DETAIL

As a not-for-profit community group, TSLoT is administered and operated solely by volunteers. The group currently has 25 volunteers who fulfil several roles including maintenance, inventory, volunteer training and operations. There are currently 96 active memberships which is just short of their target 100 and it is hoped to increase over the next year.

There are currently 277 items that can be borrowed and since opening, 755 loans have been made. Table 1 below shows the top 10 most borrowed items. Further statistics are provided in the infographic in Attachment 1.

Table 1. Top 10 most borrowed items

Item	Category	Loans
Hedger	Electric Hedge Trimmer	24
Food Dehydrator	Canning, Preserving, Homebrew	18
Extension cord – 18.5m for indoor/outdoor use	Extension Cords	17
Water pressure washer	Pressure Washers	14
Room Dehumidifier	Appliances	13
Triangle Sander	Sanders and Planers	13
Gazebo 3m x 3m	Canopies	13
Ice cream Maker	Appliances	12
Bunting – Red, Blue, and White	Party and Events	12
Bunting - Yellow	Party and Events	12

TSLoT continues to raise funds through grants, workshops and memberships and are now financially secure with ongoing revenue coming from annual memberships. To date they have secured over \$5,000 in grant funding and have been employed by Council to deliver several workshops as part of the Green Events program.

Leveraging the skills of the volunteers and showcasing the items available to borrow has been a win-win for both Council and the group as we demonstrate closed loop and share economy focused sustainable living to our residents. TSLoT have delivered four workshops for Council over the last 18 months, focusing on sustainable food and food waste to over 100 North Sydney residents.

The group has implemented a communications and marketing campaign which has resulted in 432 newsletter subscribers. This includes a monthly e-newsletter and presence on social media channels. Social media presence continues to increase with 3,426 on Facebook and 1,104 followers on Instagram.

Due to the success of TSLoT at the Coal Loader, other Councils have now expressed interest in establishing a library of things in their Local Government Area. TSLoT are currently in discussions with the Councils of Lane Cove, Randwick and Hunters Hill and partnerships have become a key part of the TSLoT business model to ensure financial sustainability for the group.

The success of the TSLoT trial at the Coal Loader is evident through the comments from members.

‘We borrowed a leaf vacuum, and it worked very well. So glad we could borrow it instead of buying it because we don’t use it often. Will definitely borrow other things in the future as it’s very convenient. The volunteers are super friendly and helpful, the website and the booking system are easy to use. Library of Things is such a great concept to live environmentally friendly ‘

'The Sydney Library of Things is a great local resource for all those things you need occasionally but don't want or need to buy. We've borrowed the reusable partyware for several kids' parties, fishing rods for our Scout group, the cake stand for Mother's Day, and the paper shredder for some admin. It's a fantastic initiative that is helping to reduce consumption and waste!'

'Borrowed outdoor gas heater for a winter party along with fairy lights and champagne glasses. Was fantastic service, easy pick up. Gorgeous volunteers. Highly recommend joining the library!'

'The library has everything I need. Great service and easy to book. I can save space, money, and care about the environment. Why buy when you can borrow?'

'Borrowed an air Mattress for a camping trip. Had a great few nights sleep. Worked perfectly and saved me a few bucks too. Great service as always. Cheers Guys.'

'This is such a great resource. We borrowed the party set which contained a setting for 25. Our guests were very happy not to be using disposable party items. The box contained good quality plastic plates, tumblers, wine glasses (plastic) and metal utensils (knives, forks, and spoons). Will definitely borrow again.'

'Fantastic initiative and well worth the small membership fee. All equipment in good working order and friendly volunteers.'

'Amazing resource. Have used several items already including tools, gurney and hedge trimmer, dehumidifier, and camping gear. Every council should have this available.'

Future Direction

Throughout the trial period, TSLoT has proven to be a successful model of a volunteer led, not for profit community resource that promotes key themes of sustainability including the share economy, waste reduction and community connectedness.

The initial trial period for TSLoT at the Coal Loader ended in June 2023, and a new lease agreement is now needed. A further report will be presented to Council, after which, it is anticipated that the lease for Workshop 2 at the Coal Loader may be extended for a further 2 years with options to extend (in keeping with the lease terms of other Council owned facilities).

THE SYDNEY LIBRARY OF THINGS: JANUARY 2022 - JUNE 2023



25 volunteers

Volunteers fill a variety of roles from executive committee, maintenance, IT & fundraising to front desk support.

96 members

Of these, 36 are annual memberships which guarantees on-going income.



277 loan items

Items include garden tools, kitchen items, power tools, camping gear, games and puzzles.

755 loans made

Members can borrow 5 items every fortnight for two weeks at a time.



8,624 loan days

The number of days that items have been out of the library and being used by members.

432 newsletter subscribers

They receive a monthly newsletter containing information about new library items and how to use them.



3,426 Facebook followers

In addition to these, TSLoT has 3,000 people who 'like' our Facebook page.

1,104 Instagram followers

They receive regular posts about TSLoT, items that are available and how others are using items.



THE SYDNEY LIBRARY OF THINGS
AT
THE COAL LOADER CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABILITY



3.2. Community Recycling Centre Operations

AUTHOR: Shivaan Kumar, Waste Management Officer

ENDORSED BY: Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operations of the Northern Sydney Community Recycling Centre based in Artarmon.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- North Sydney Council operates the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) on behalf of the City of Ryde and the Councils of Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, and Willoughby.
- Residents can safely dispose of household problem waste items including paint, motor oil, gas bottles, fire extinguishers, e-waste, light bulbs, batteries, smoke detectors, x-rays, printer cartridges and mobile phones.
- Over 28,700 residents used the CRC in Financial Year 22/23 of which 9,925 were from the North Sydney Council area and approximately 562,968kg of problem waste was collected.
- A total of 4,748g of wearable textile was also collected between October 2022 and June 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Funds for the establishment of the CRC were provided through the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). Under the terms of the Deed of Agreement, the partner Councils have committed to funding the CRC for the term of the lease. North Sydney Council's contribution is funded from the Domestic Waste Management levy each financial year.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report on Community Recycling Centre Operations be received.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Our Living Environment
 - 1.2 Environmentally sustainable community

5. Our Civic Leadership
 - 5.2 Strong civic leadership and customer focussed services
 - 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does
 - 5.4 Council services are efficient and easy to access.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils was successful in obtaining \$150,000 of grant funding from the NSW EPA's *Waste Less, Recycle More* Initiative to establish a Community Recycling Centre (CRC). The primary objective of the CRC was to facilitate the safe disposal of household wastes that would be hazardous to the environment and to public health.

The CRC was established in Artarmon in alliance with the City of Ryde and Hunter's Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, and Willoughby Councils. The signed Deed of Agreement, Northern Sydney Community Recycling Centre ("Deed") underpins the development of the CRC and guarantees its financing for the term of the lease on the site. Under the terms of the Deed, North Sydney Council is responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the CRC.

The CRC was opened for operations on 12 April 2017. With more residents dropping off problem waste each year, and limited room at the CRC for storage of waste, restrictions apply on the maximum quantity of waste dropped off per visit. A maximum limit of 20 litres or 20kg per customer per drop off is currently allowed.

Several household problem waste types are targeted at the CRC including paint, motor oil, gas bottles, fire extinguishers, e-waste, fluorescent light tubes/bulbs, batteries, smoke detectors, x-rays, printer cartridges and mobile phones. The program aims to increase community awareness of good recycling and disposal practices for household problem waste and to provide a sustainable solution for managing them. At present, the CRC also accepts wearable textiles (trial phase up to April 2024) with possible extension of the collection service.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

DETAIL

The CRC keeps records of the number of visitors, postcodes and weight of waste collected each financial year. As seen in Figure 1 below, the CRC recorded its highest collected weight of materials in the last financial year (FY), resulting in 562,968kg of waste saved from landfill. FY19/20 experienced an increased number of drop-offs, coinciding with the first wave of COVID-19. As most residents either stayed or worked from home, many had more time to drop off items at the CRC. FY20/21 showed a similar trend but there was a significant drop in FY 21/22 as the CRC was closed for 5 months during extended lockdown.



Figure 1. Kilograms of items collected at the CRC since July 2017 till June 2023

Postcodes are recorded for each car entering the CRC. Last FY recorded one of the busiest years with over 28,700 cars visiting the CRC. A total of 9,925 residents from North Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) used the CRC, which made up approximately 34% followed by 66% from other Council areas. Figure 2 shows that out of the 9,925 residents, postcode 2065 (Crows Nest, Wollstonecraft, and St Leonards) recorded one of the highest users of the CRC, followed by 2060 (Lavender Bay, McMahons Point, North Sydney, and Waverton) and 2090 (Cremorne and Cremorne Point).

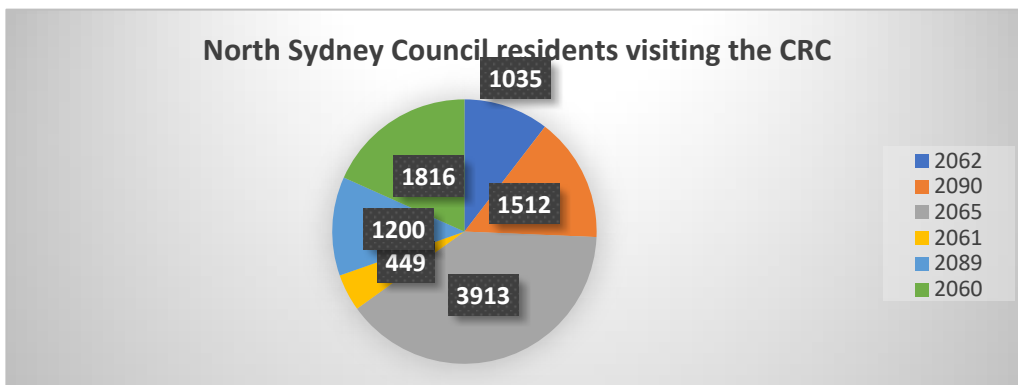


Figure 2 North Sydney Council residents visiting the CRC in FY22/23

Resourcing

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) continues to facilitate the collection and disposal charges of seven of the nine designated problem waste types accepted at the facility. The costs associated with the disposal or recycling of motor oils and lead acid car batteries are borne by the alliance Councils and not by the EPA. All other day-to-day operational costs are shared by the partner councils based on the relative number of households in each respective LGA.

E-waste is collected under the Federal Government’s National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme (NTCRS) which includes televisions, computers, printers, and other small computer parts. The objective of the Scheme is to increase the recovery of reusable materials in a safe, scientific, and environmentally sound manner. Non-scheme e-waste is also accepted at the CRC which includes small electrical kitchen appliances and other small day-to-day use items. The collection and recycling cost is evenly distributed between the alliance Councils and North Sydney Council’s contribution is funded from Domestic Waste Management levy each FY.

Problem Waste

In FY22/23, a total of 558,220kg of “problem waste” was dropped off at the CRC. Figure 3 shows that water-based paint made up approximately 42% of items dropped off followed by gas cylinders, 16% and oil-based paint, 15%.

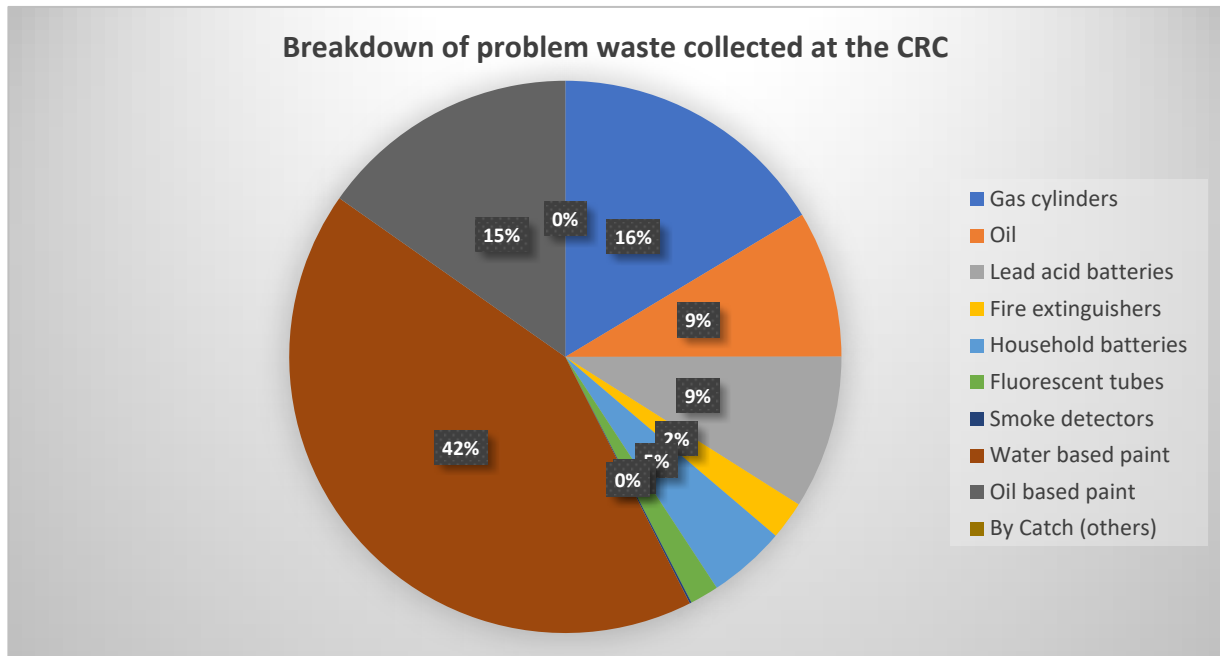


Figure 3. Breakdown of problem waste collected at the CRC during FY22/23

Table 1 below shows the list of problem waste collected at the CRC and how they are recycled and/or processed.

Problem Waste	Recycled and processed method
Paint	Paint is mixed with other waste solvents and used as an alternative to fuel in cement kilns. The metal containers are recycled.
Lead acid batteries	The batteries are sent to recyclers where the lead, acid and plastic are recovered and recycled.
Fluorescent tubes and globes containing mercury	Recyclers crush the tubes to separate the phosphor powder from the glass. They feed the powder through receiving containers, where it is filtered to capture fugitive mercury emissions. The mercury is then separated by distillation and sold for a range of industrial uses. The metals are also recycled.
Gas bottles	Undamaged bottles are retested, restamped, and entered into the hire industry. Damaged bottles are punctured and recycled as scrap metal.
Used household and motor oil	Oils are processed to product lubricant to be used in cars/machinery or to be used in waste to energy combustion
X-rays	Silver is extracted from granulated material, after a chemical reaction which is recovered and used in construction industry.

E-waste including mobile phones

Figure 4 below shows that out of the 341,473kg of e-waste dropped off at the CRC, 96% is scheme based and is covered by the Federal Government's NTCRS Scheme whereas the other 4% is funded from the contributions from alliance Councils.

The first stage of the e-waste recycling involves dismantling, shredding, and sorting the device into various usable parts and materials including glass, metals, plastics, batteries, and printed circuit boards. Given the availability of infrastructure and an established end market to recycle, almost 90% of the materials recovered from e-waste are reintroduced as raw materials which are used in other new products.

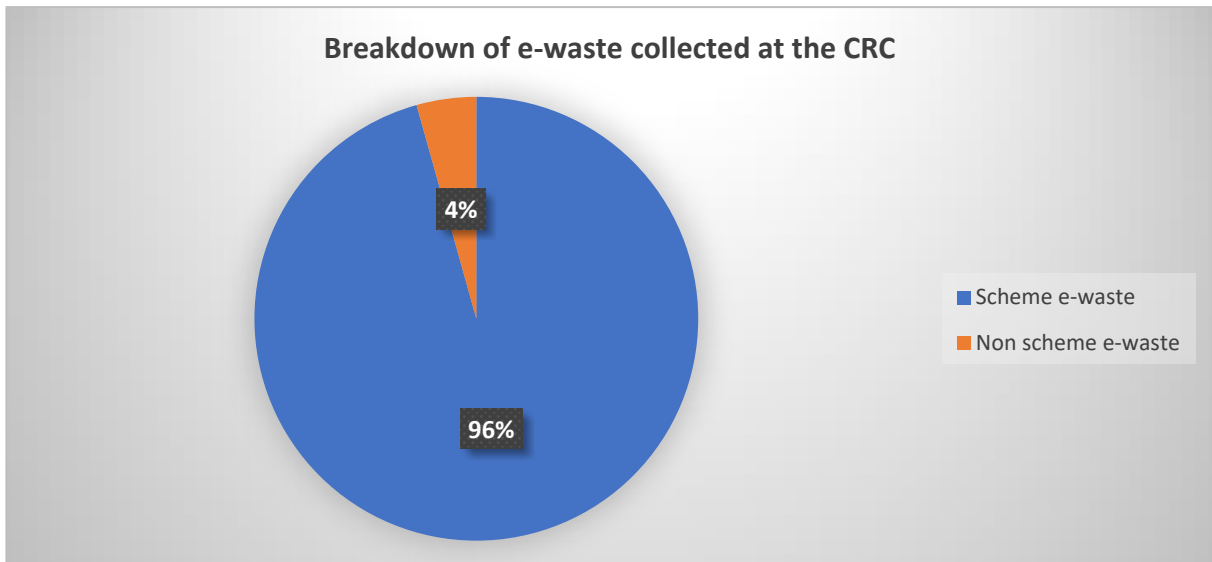


Figure 4. Breakdown of scheme and non-scheme e-waste collected at the CRC during FY22-23

Textiles

The Textile Collection Trial at the CRC commenced in October 2022 and was due to conclude in April 2024 as per initial agreements with the collection provider. However, given the service was well received by members of the community, the Committee of Management extended the trial for another 12 months and is now due to expire on 30 April 2024 with further possible extension. In the last FY, a total of 4,748kg of textiles was collected with 96% classified as wearable and only 4% non-wearable.

Future Direction

In 2021, the NSW Government released the *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041, Stage 1 Plan: 2021-2027*, which outlines the actions that will be taken over the next 6 years to move towards a circular economy.

The actions are backed by \$356 million in funding to help deliver priority programs and policy reforms including supporting the operations of CRC's.

At present, the CRC site is leased until 31 March 2025 with an option to renew for another 3 years.

3.3. Coal Loader Future Directions Survey Report

AUTHOR: Leonie Netting, Coordinator Coal Loader Sustainability Centre

ENDORSED BY: Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment

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:

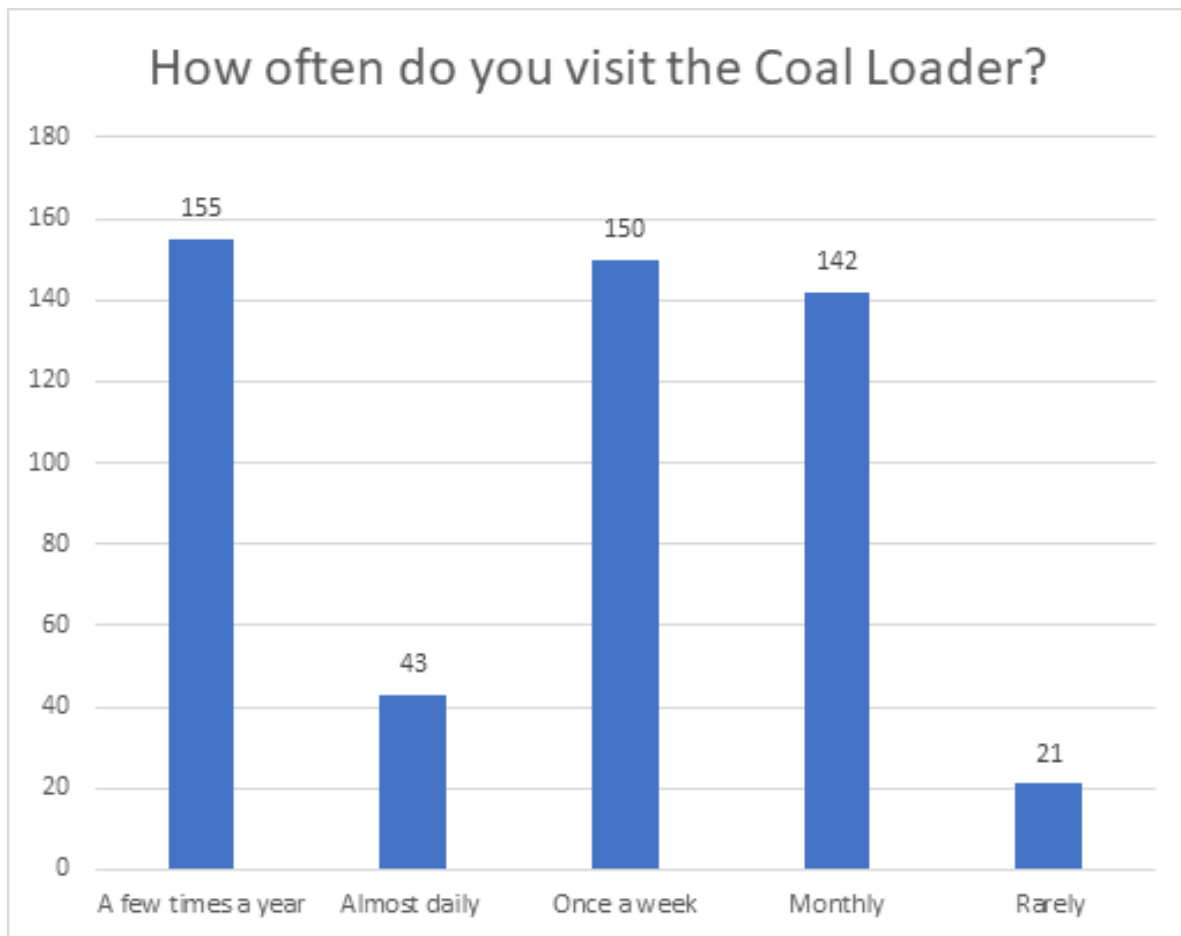
- The Coal Loader community – gardening volunteers, allotment gardeners, venue users, workshop and event participants

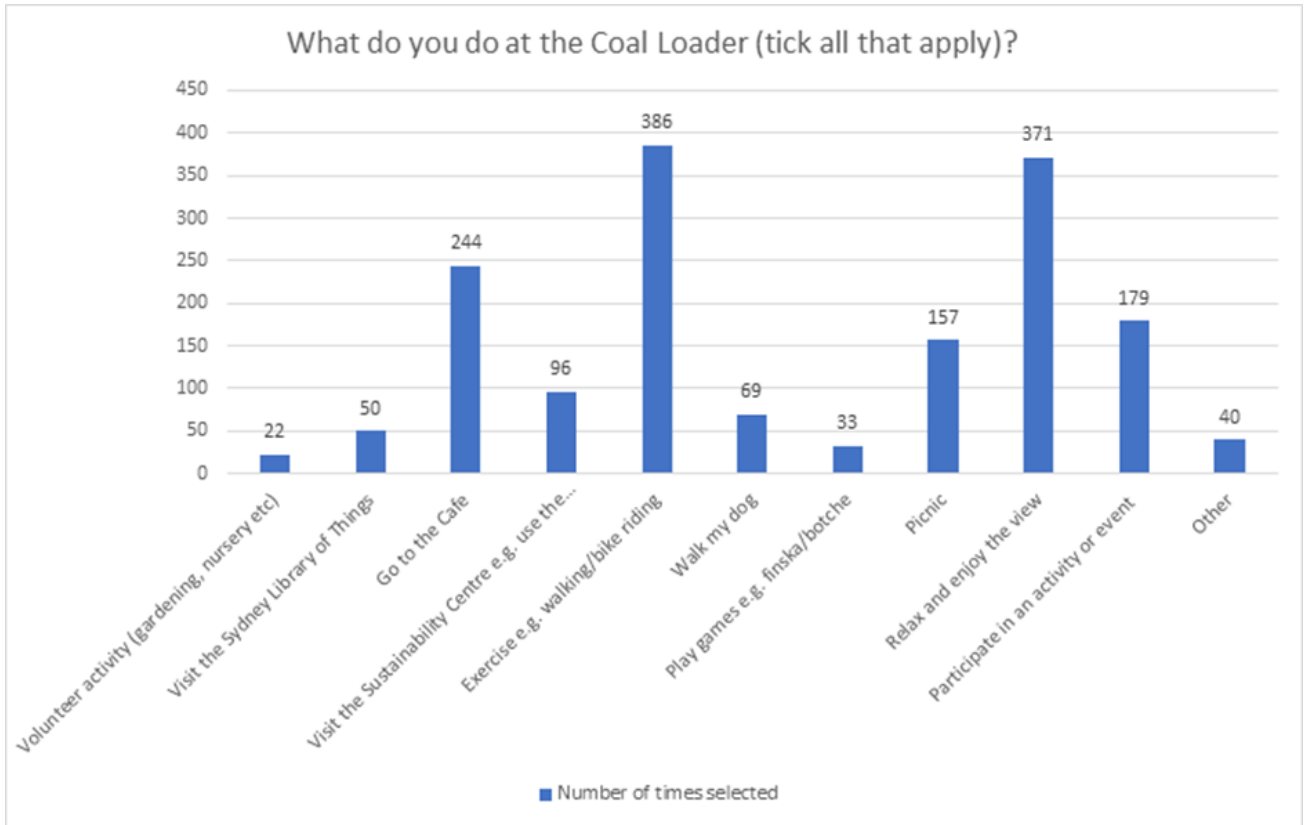
- Local community including precinct groups.
- Regional community.
- Educational institutions - schools, universities and TAFE.
- All demographics – young people, parents, seniors, people with a disability, indigenous people.
- Community groups - North Shore Mums, Streets Alive, Waverton Hub.
- Industry 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.

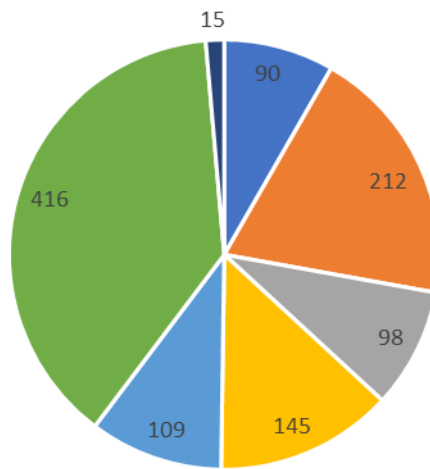




Of the other responses provided in the survey the prominent words included:

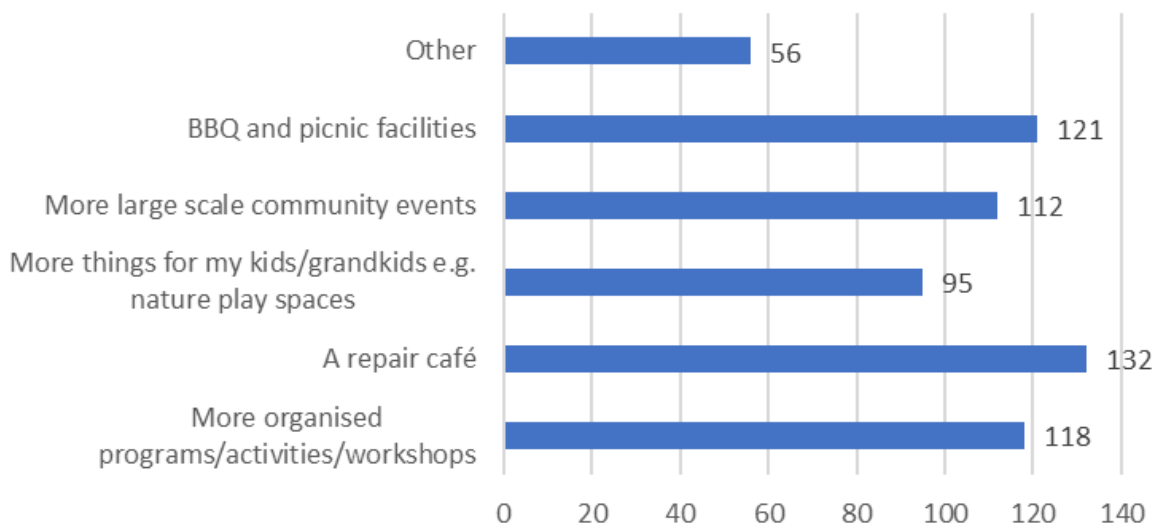


I see the Coal Loader primarily as



- 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?



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

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

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

Page 4

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.

Phone: 9936 8100
Email: yoursay@northsydney.nsw.gov.au
Website: 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.

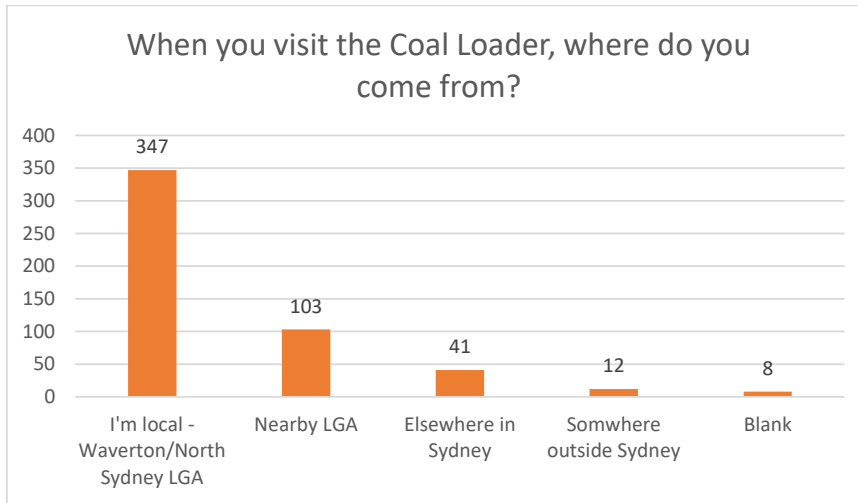
The survey received high participation with 511 valid contributions.

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I see the Coal Loader primarily as:	6
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What else would you like to see at the Coal Loader?	9
What kind of events would you like to see at the Coal Loader?	11
Please tell us any suggestions or ideas as to how we can improve the Coal Loader	12
How do you hear about what's going on at the Coal Loader?	13

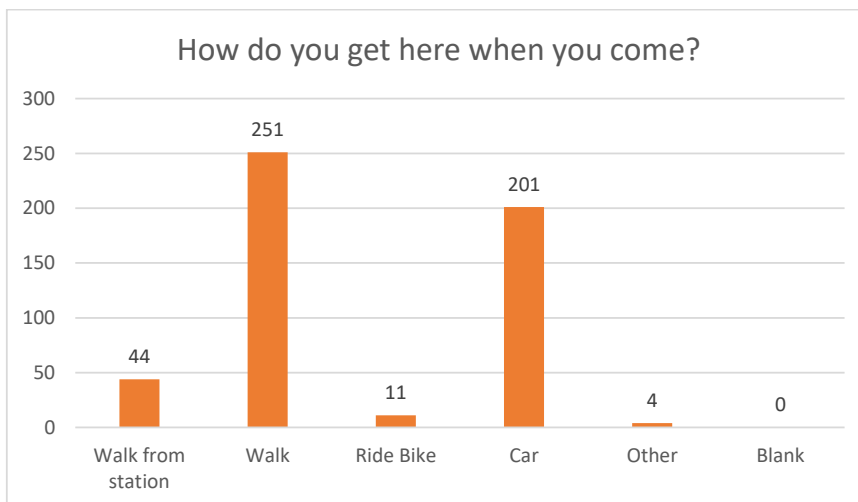
When you visit the Coal Loader, where do you come from?

The majority of survey participants were from the local area:



How do you get here when you come?

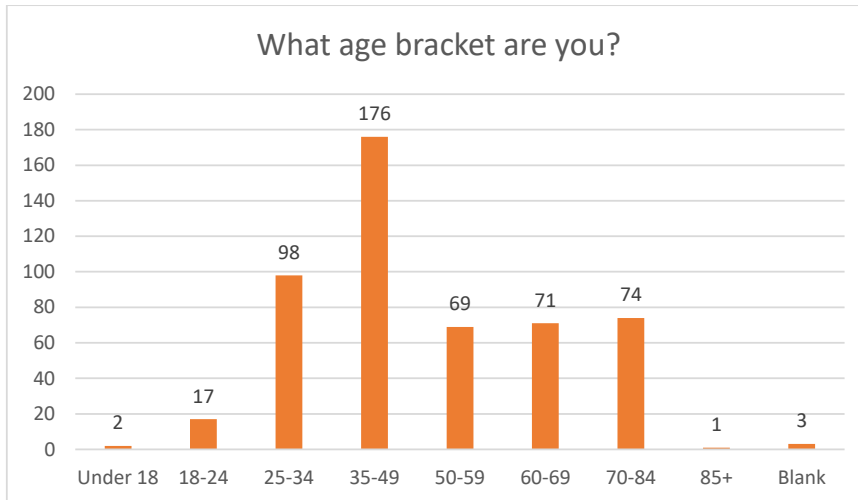
The majority of visitors who participated in the survey get to the Coal Loader by walking or car. One other response which was unique from the options provided was that they ran to the site:



- 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

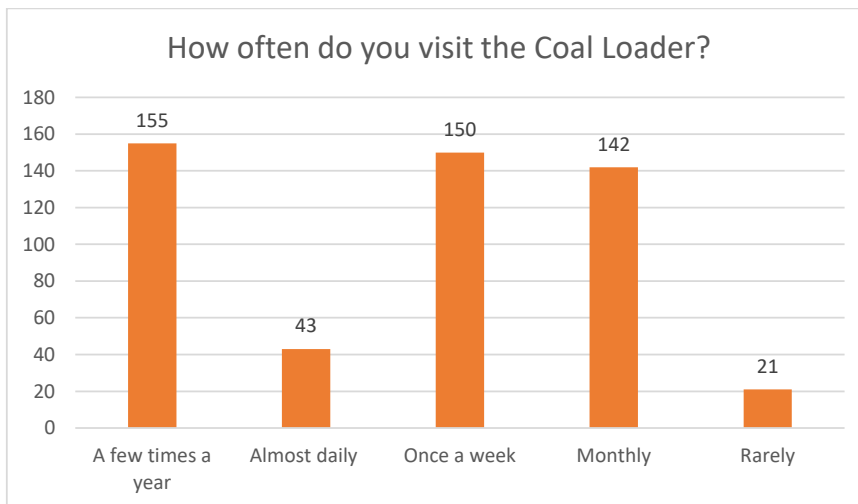
What age bracket are you?

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:



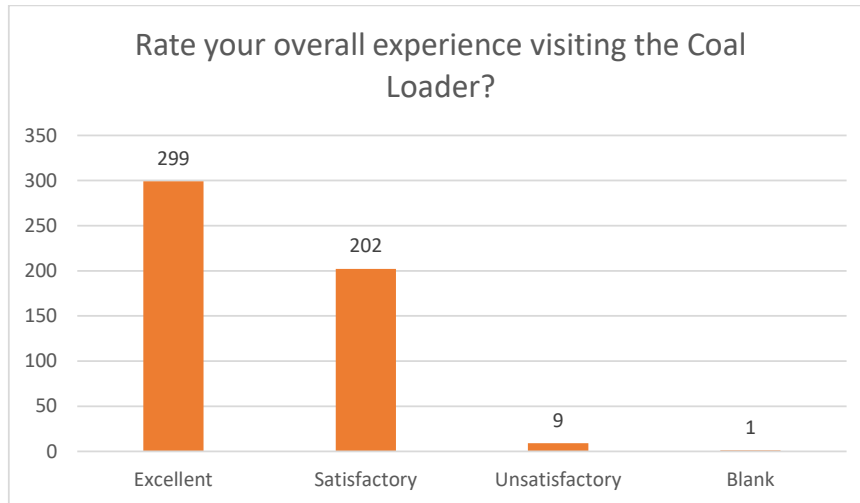
How often do you visit the Coal Loader?

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



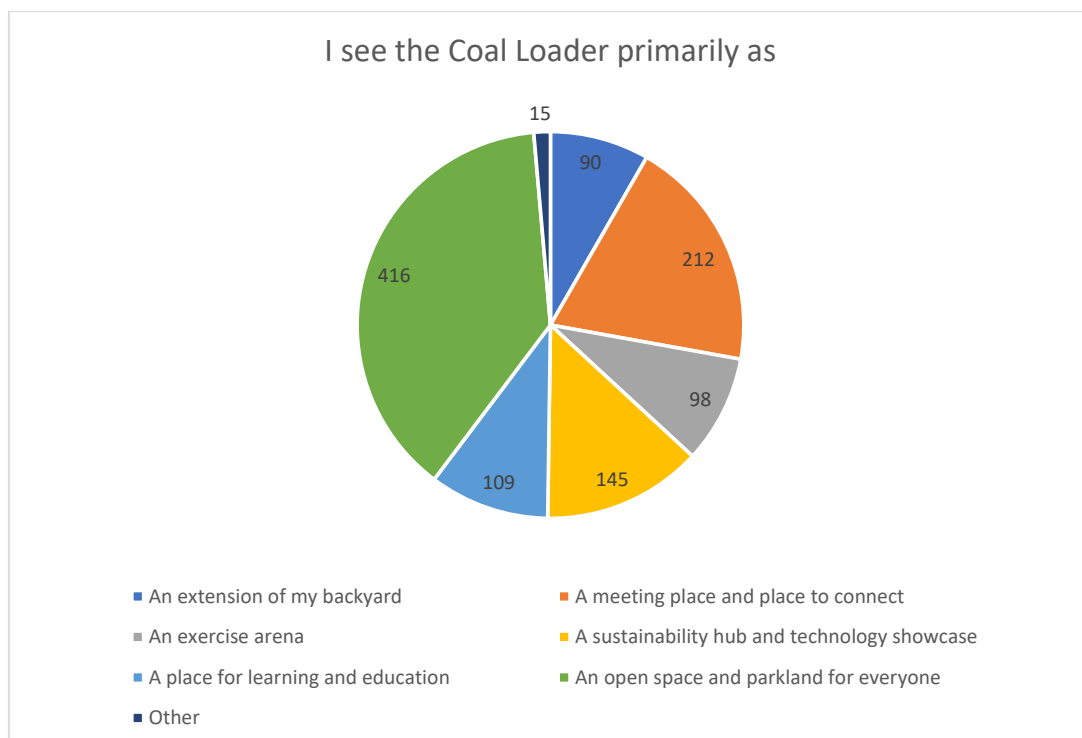
Rate your overall experience visiting the Coal Loader?

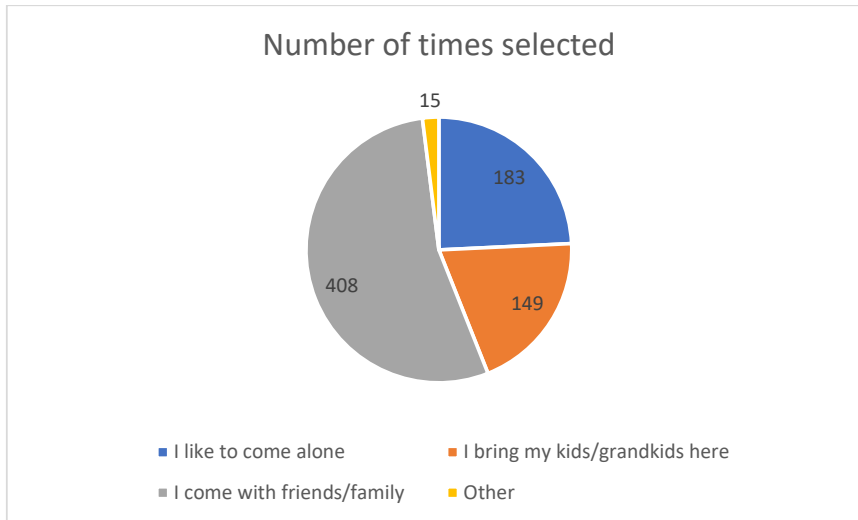
Experience of the Coal Loader was rated highly:



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:



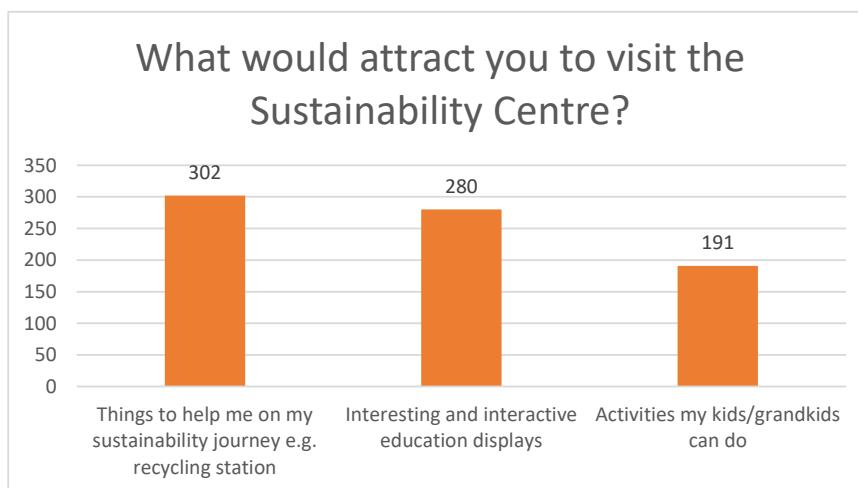


frequency	Word
3	dog
2	visitors
2	group
2	cafe
2	volunteers



What would attract you to visit the Sustainability Centre?

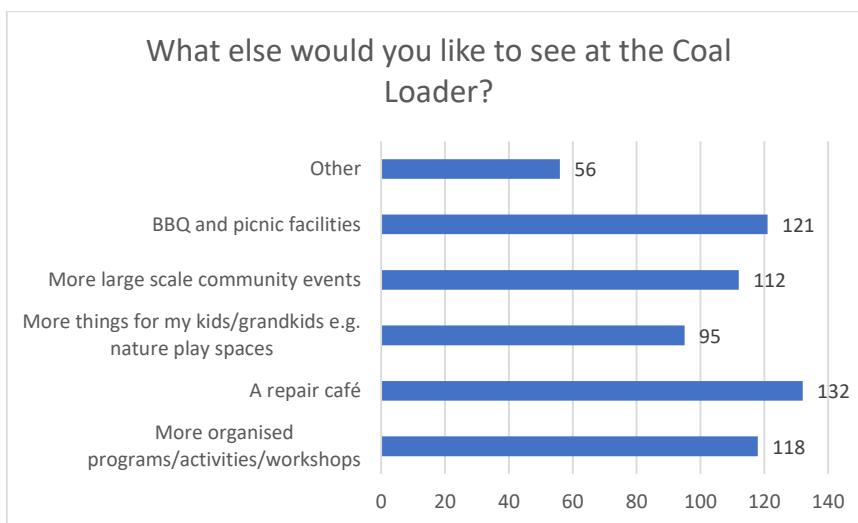
Sustainability is the driving attraction at the Coal Loader:





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

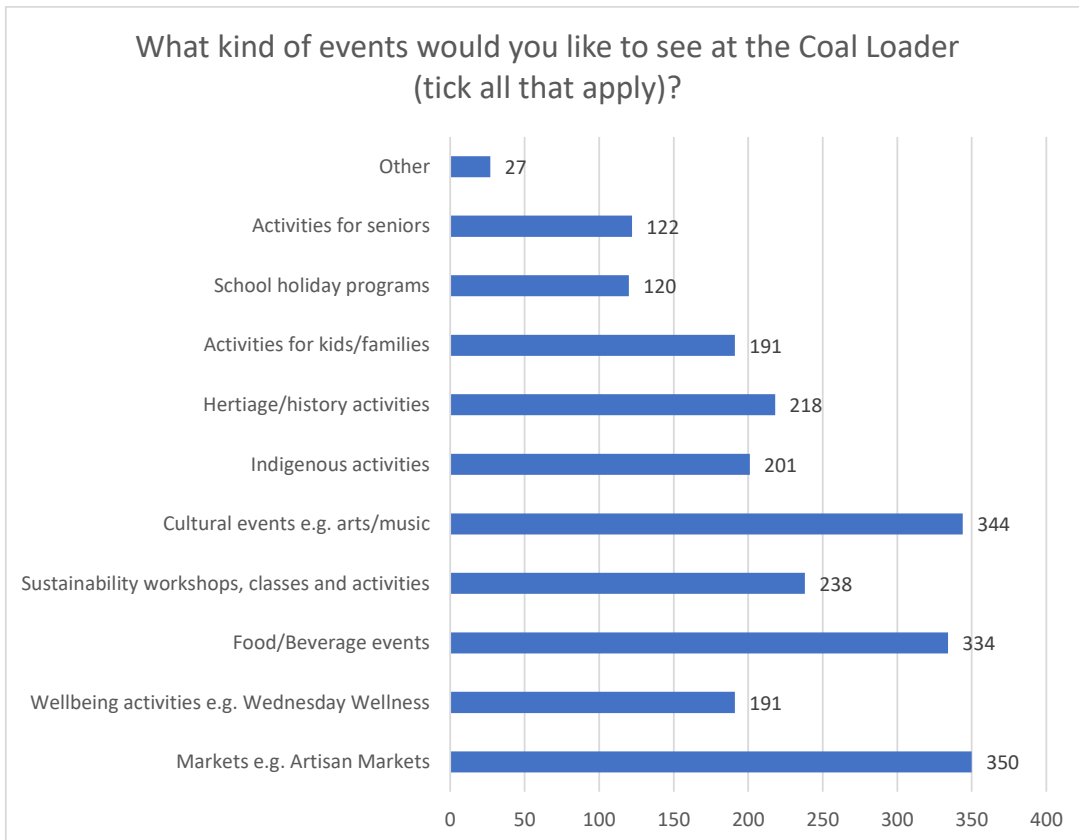
This question was accidentally deleted during the survey’s open time but there were still 284 respondents for this question. Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple answers for this question and a Repair Café had the most selections:



What kind of events would you like to see at the Coal Loader?

The three events that contributors to the survey would like to see more of include:

1. Markets
2. Cultural events
3. Food/Beverage events



Of the 27 'other' respondents main words extracted backed up the results of the main options:

Frequency	Word
5	activities
4	events
3	food
3	eg
3	people
3	cafe
3	send
3	learning



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!

3.4. Bushcare Community Nursery Update

AUTHOR: Gareth Debney, Bushland Management Co-ordinator

ENDORSED BY: Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

PURPOSE:

To provide an annual summary of the operation, activities and achievements of staff and volunteers at the Bushcare Community Nursery during 2022/23.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Council's Bushland Management Team delivers a range of community engagement and education programs aimed at increasing community awareness of urban ecology and the importance of natural area conservation.
- Commencing in the mid 1990's, Council's Bushcare Program is the primary avenue for community participation in bushland conservation. There are currently 12 Bushcare Groups in North Sydney, including the Bushcare Community Nursery.
- Formed in 2011 and based at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability, the Bushcare Community Nursery Group grows provenance tubestock plants to support the full breadth of Council's biodiversity conservation and community engagement programs (including Bushcare; Native Havens; Adopt-a-Plot; Citizenship; National / Schools Tree Day etc).
- Emerging from the significant disruption to volunteer programs caused by the COVID pandemic, plant production in the Bushcare Community Nursery has recovered to pre-pandemic levels through the combined efforts of our returning volunteers and the dedicated work of Council's Bushcare Community Nursery Supervisor.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Bushcare Community Nursery operations are fully funded under Council's Environmental Levy and sufficient budget has been allocated.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. THAT** the Bushcare Community Nursery Update 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

5. Our Civic Leadership
 - 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

BACKGROUND

In the context of North Sydney Council, “Bushcare” is a catch-all phrase that encapsulates most of our community education and engagement activities focussing on biodiversity conservation. The Bushcare Program incorporates twelve volunteer groups working across 16 bushland sites within eleven reserves. The Bushcare Community Nursery supplies most of the Council’s native plant needs for both on-ground rehabilitation works, as well as community plant give-aways at markets, Citizenship Ceremonies, Schools Tree Day and the popular Native Havens home habitat gardening program.

In addition, Bushcare includes an annual program of workshops, events and activities provided for the general community, pre-school to primary school aged children and for volunteers. The Bushland Team delivers other, related programs including Adopt-a-Plot, Native Havens and Wildlife Watch.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

DETAIL

Following the disruption to normal operations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, financial year (FY) 22/23 marked a return to business as usual for plant production and volunteer participation in Council’s Bushcare Community Nursery, with plants being produced and supplied for the full suite of bushland programs and community engagement events.

The total number of plants used across all programs during FY 22/23 was 10,591. This is consistent with previous calendar years (see Table 1), except 2020 when COVID-19 caused the cancellation of several key community planting events.

Table 1: Bushcare Community Nursery plant supply 2013 – 2022/23

Year	Plants used from nursery
2013	9,513
2014	11,107
2015	9,170
2016	11,767
2017	12,382
2018	11,382
2019	11,209
2020	8,382*
2021	11,497*
2022	11,142*
<u>FY2022/23</u>	10,591*
*total excludes dead/waste/unaccounted for stock	

Plant usage by Bushland Programs has increased every year since 2020 due to favourable La Nina weather conditions bringing reliable rainfall. Bushland reserve plantings accounted for the highest use of nursery stock, with 3,122 plants being used by the Bushland Operations Team.

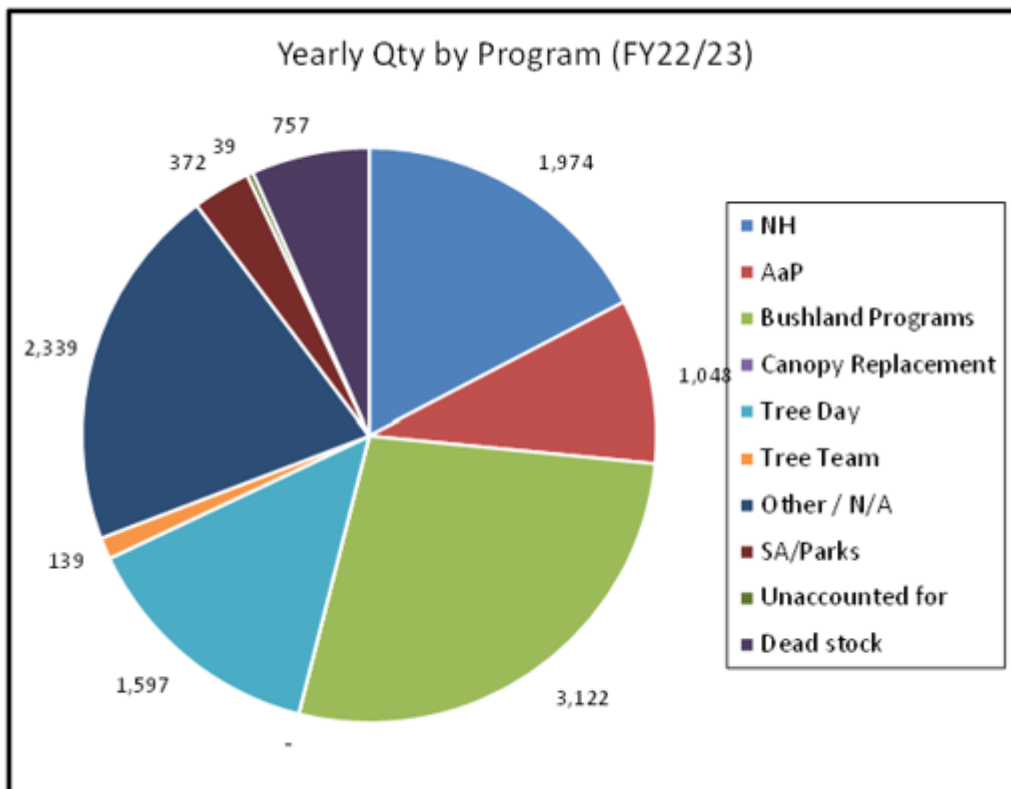


Figure 1: Annual plant usage by bushland program (FY 22/23)

Plant usage for community events and giveaways (included under “Other/NA”) has also increased, with citizenship ceremonies supplying 903 plants to new Australians. Citizenship plants are now exclusively grown at the Bushcare Community Nursery, rather than ordered from external suppliers as was the case previously.

Other community events included Trees for Mum (150 plants), Bushcare Community Nursery Open Day (280), NSC Garden Awards ceremony (237), Bushcare Christmas party (174) and the Wenona School planting at Forsyth Park (293), amongst others. National Tree Day 2022 accounted for 1,597 plants, consistent with years prior to COVID restrictions.

Plants provided to residents through Council's Native Havens (NH) home habitat gardening program steadily increased after the decline in 2020/21 caused by COVID restrictions preventing home visits, as well as a short program hiatus during staffing turnover. Likewise, the Adopt-a-Plot bushland rehabilitation program reached its highest level of plant usage since 2019.

The Bushcare Community Nursery continued to provide occasional plants to other Open Space teams, including a small number of specially propagated advanced trees for the Urban Forest Team and mixed native tubestock supplied to Gardens Teams and Streets Alive.

Dead/waste stock mostly comprised unused surplus or old/rootbound plants deemed undesirable for high value projects. 85% were grown in the Bushcare Community Nursery, with the remaining 15% delivered stock. Where possible, these "waste stock" plants were given away to volunteers (including Streets Alive) or other Council Open Space Teams, for planting sites where potentially low survival rates were not going to be a critical factor.

"Unaccounted for" plants are missing stock, presumed taken by members of the public who are aware of our security vulnerabilities when the nursery is unattended. The number is likely higher, only the obvious has been recorded, but thefts do seem to have abated since their height during COVID lockdowns.

Propagation and provenance

A total of 153 different native plant species were grown by the nursery in FY 22/23, which is consistent with previous years. Propagation success was also achieved with some difficult species using a range of techniques, including Pink Crowea (*Crowea saligna* – from seed rather than the more usual cuttings), Tree Broom Heath (*Monotoca elliptica* – from cuttings) and Flannel Flowers (*Actinotus helianthii* – from fresh seed).

The total number of plants propagated in the nursery by staff and volunteers during the reporting period was 10,218. Most species were grown from locally collected seed, with the remainder propagated vegetatively from division or cuttings.

From a total holding stock of 11,387 plants, including dead/waste and unaccounted for stock, 78% (8,903) of plants were propagated and grown in the Bushcare Nursery and 22% (2,484) were supplied by external nurseries (Figure 2, below). Most externally sourced plants were used in the Native Havens program and for community events / giveaways. This ensures that our North Sydney Council (NSC) bushland provenance plants, collected from small / fragmented bushland reserves, are available for bushland rehabilitation projects that fulfill Council's conservation objectives.

Origin	Qty	%
NSC	8,903	78%
D	2,484	22%
Total	11,387	

Figure 2: Percentage plants grown at the Bushcare Community Nursery (NSC) compared to delivered plants (D) from external nurseries

For bushland programs, a small number of species were also sourced externally to maintain genetic diversity and bolster our local populations, as well as to replace historic species lost from NSC bushland remnants through senescence and a long absence of fire.

In FY 22/23, the Bushcare Community Nursery (NSC) grew 57% of plants used for Native Havens (see Figure 3) comprising a mixture of bushland stock and species propagated from non-provenance or nursery stock plants. This is comparable to 2020 (58%) but lower than calendar years 2021 (74%) and 2022 (76%). The proportion of NSC to delivered (D) stock used by Native Havens (NH), largely depends on which species are requested by the Bushland Project Officer within the context of what species are available at the time.

Program	Origin	Qty	%
NH	NSC	1,129	57%
NH	D	845	43%

Figure 3: Percentage plants grown at the Bushcare Community Nursery (NSC) or delivered (D) from external nurseries for the Native Havens home habitat gardening program.

Excluding (D) delivered plants, the estimated value of outgoing NSC stock grown by volunteers and staff was \$29,152 (Figure 4, below). This represents a saving to council with fewer plants bought from external suppliers. Most plants comprised forestry tubes (8,462 @ \$3.00 equivalent value), with the remainder being a range of larger pots, grow-bags and trays. The value of plants has been estimated and averaged from prices charged at specialist provenance nursery suppliers that service the Sydney-north region.

Origin	Size	Qty	\$ each	Total \$
NSC	Tube	8,462	\$ 3.00	\$ 25,386
NSC	Mega Tube	71	\$ 10.00	\$ 710
NSC	Round Tube	296	\$ 6.00	\$ 1,776
NSC	4" SQ	10	\$ 6.00	\$ 60
NSC	6-8" Pot	30	\$ 15.00	\$ 450
NSC	Rocket	10	\$ 25.00	\$ 250
NSC	Tray/Flat	11	\$ 20.00	\$ 220
NSC	45 Litre	3	\$ 100.00	\$ 300
				\$ 29,152

Figure 4: Estimated value of plants grown in the Bushcare Community Nursery

Volunteers

The Bushcare Community Nursery Group has seven regular members, most of whom have been with the group for many years, some since its inception in 2013. The group meets from 9am-12pm on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (February to November).

In FY 22/23, the Bushcare Community Nursery group contributed 278.4 hours of volunteer labour. This figure is higher than any other Bushcare group, helped by the propagation shelter affording all-weather group meetings. Several volunteers also assisted on Nursery Open Day and with other community events such as the Building Bridges to Boorowa planting weekend in May 2023.

Nursery Events

Bushcare Community Nursery Open Day was held in September 2022 and was well attended by local residents who received free native plants and advice on establishing a fauna habitat garden on their properties. The event also serves to connect locals with Council's Bushcare, Wildlife Watch, Native Havens and Adopt-a-Plot programs.

In October 2022, the Bushcare Nursery Supervisor facilitated a fully booked seed propagation workshop, where participants received hands-on training in propagating native plants from seed. In March 2023, the popular cuttings propagation workshop was delivered, where participants received hands-on training in propagating native plants from stem cuttings.

Trees for Newborns trial program

The Bushcare Community Nursery will be participating in this new Council initiative by providing local native trees in 70mm (mega) tubes. The trees will be planted on private property by residents with newborns.

Planning for 2023/24

As the prevailing weather patterns transition from the wetter La Nina of the past three years toward a drying El Nino, opportunities for planting may become more targeted and at a level that can be sustained by hand-watering during the critical establishment phase. The Bushcare Nursery Supervisor works closely with the Bushland Management Coordinator and Bush Regeneration Team Leader to ensure that nursery production / species selection meet the requirements of our bushland rehabilitation objectives.

4. General Business

1. Philip Worrall would like to discuss the following:
 - Cat control law NSW- role of local government.

2. Jane Theau would like to discuss the following:
 - North Sydney Repair Café
 - Community Education

5. Closure