

**Report to General Manager**Attachments:
Nil

SUBJECT: Lost Bird Found Mental Health Creative Arts Project Evaluation**AUTHOR:** Camelia Tobia, Access and Inclusion Co-ordinator**ENDORSED BY:** Martin Ellis, Director Community and Library Services**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Lost Bird Found Project is a Council-led initiative to raise awareness and breakdown negative stigma attached to mental health. Throughout the months of August and September individuals and groups were invited to participate in bird making workshops, creating birds hidden in the community for people to find and keep. Attached to each bird is a card with details of the project and where to access information and support on mental health services. This year there were 26 groups involved in the project, with over 2,500 birds made.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The cost to deliver the project in 2019 was \$2,459. Council applied for and was successful in receiving grant funding of \$500 (included in the above expenditure) from the Mental Health Association to deliver this project.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Lost Bird Found Mental Health Creative Arts Project report be received.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

Direction: 4. Our Social Vitality

Outcome: 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe

4.2 North Sydney is creative and home to popular events

BACKGROUND

In Australia one in four people experience mental health at some point in their lives. Despite the high prevalence there continues to be a negative stigma attached to mental health, and unlike physical illness, people continue to hesitate to talk about it.

The Lost Bird Found project was established six years ago by the Community Arts Worker in the Community Development Team to celebrate Mental Health Month in October.

The aims of the project are to raise awareness of mental health, create opportunities to provide positive messaging about emotional wellbeing and create environments that lend themselves to having safe and supported conversations about mental health.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The sustainability implications are of a minor nature and did not warrant a detailed assessment.

DETAIL

During the months of August and September individuals and community groups were invited to participate in bird making workshops, creating birds made from wood, paper, clay and textile materials. In total, over 2500 birds were made this year, a significant increase from when the project was first established and approximately 200 birds were made.

Attached to each of the handmade birds is a card. The card provides details of the project, including links to Council's website and the project's Facebook and Instagram pages. On these pages are details of where people can access additional information and resources to support people experiencing mental health.

When the Lost Bird Found project was initially established in 2014 participants were limited to the North Sydney LGA, however as the project has developed there has been overwhelming interest from community partners and local businesses to become involved and extend the breadth of the project further afield.

The table below lists the partners involved in the project this year.

| Name of Organisation | LGA |
|---|--|
| Australian Catholic University | North Sydney |
| Blue Leader Pty Ltd | North Sydney |
| Bradfield Park Cares Program | North Sydney |
| Creating Wellbeing | North Sydney |
| Central Coast Council | Central Coast |
| Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability | North Sydney |
| Crows Nest Centre | North Sydney |
| Family Day Care | North Sydney |
| Jacaranda Cottage | North Sydney |
| Laing O'Rourke | North Sydney |
| Moreton Bay Women's Wellbeing Hub | Moreton Bay (QLD) |
| Mosman Occasional Childcare Centre | Mosman |
| Neutral Bay Community Centre | North Sydney |
| North Sydney Community Centre | North Sydney |
| North Sydney Council (Community workshop) | North Sydney |
| North Sydney Council (Staff Workshop) | North Sydney |
| North Sydney Men's Shed | North Sydney |
| Only About Children | Mosman |
| Parramatta Mission | North Sydney, Parramatta and Central Coast |
| Planet X Youth Centre | North Sydney |
| Saint Ignatius College | Hunters Hill |
| Space to Express | Hunters Hill |
| SGCH (St George Community Housing) | North Sydney |
| Stanton Library | North Sydney |
| TEDx Macquarie University | Ryde |
| We Work Coworking Space | North Sydney |

Additionally, we had several individuals who approached Council to make birds at home and donate them to the project.

To respond to the growing interest in the Lost Bird Found project and maintain the project's integrity a toolkit was developed. The toolkit included a registration form, terms and conditions for the project and resources to assist groups in the delivery of bird making workshops.

The Lost Bird Found project attracted media attention, with editorials included in North Shore Living (September 2019 edition) and Northsider (Issue 4 Spring 2019). Details of several bird making workshops were also listed in the Mosman Daily (22 August 2019).

Local MP Felicity Wilson mentioned the Lost Bird Found project in Parliament on 24 October 2019, acknowledging Council and the project partners for "sparking conversation about mental health in my community" through the delivery of this project. Ms Wilson commented, "I thank North Sydney Mayor Jilly Gibson, and everyone who got involved in making the birds, including all the kids from North Sydney Council's Family Day Care, Suzette Venter and colleagues at North Sydney business Blue Leader.

The project was officially launched by Mayor Jilly Gibson on Tuesday 1 October and was well attended by project partners and community members. Those who attended were invited to take away a flock of birds to hide in their neighborhood throughout Mental Health Month (October) for people to find.



The project utilises social media platforms, namely Facebook, to promote the project and increase its aims. With the support of the Communications team, this year there was a strong emphasis on utilising the Facebook page to extend the project's reach. From last year the number of people who liked the project's Facebook page increased by 82%, from 321 to 585 page likes.

One post in particular, Morgan’s Story, generated significant interest and engagement on the project’s Facebook page.

Lost Bird Found - Mental Health Project
Published by Harriott McLaren [?] · 24 September ·

MORGAN'S STORY
Mental health is important to me because it effects more than just those who talk about it. It is an issue that impacts so many people in the world and many of those who it may be impacting may not realise it yet.
My little sister has been suffering from severe mental health issues for 7 years now. She is brave and courageous and has showed me that no matter how tough times get that by being open and by speaking out you are not only getting help for yourself b... See more

1,982 People reached | 905 Engagements | Boost Post

You and 67 others | 6 comments | 6 shares

Like | Comment | Share

Most relevant

Write a comment...

Lost Bird Found - Mental Health Project Morgan at TEDxMacquarieUniversity on Saturday!

Like · Reply · Commented on by Harriott McLaren [?] · 5w

Ariane Simon I'm so proud of my girls, Morgan Simon and Zoe Simon, their work in Mental Health Advocacy and living the roller coaster of uncertainty both Zoe as an individual and us as her family shows us that we are stronger and more resilient than we know. 🙌❤️

Like · Reply · Message · 5w

View 4 more comments

TEDx Macquarie University invited the Lost Bird Found project to participate in their event in September. Morgan was one of the participants who got involved. Whilst decorating her bird Morgan described her personal connection with mental illness, an illness her sister has struggled with for the majority of her life. Morgan agreed to share her story on the project’s Facebook page in hope that her story would inspire others. The level of engagement in this post would indicate Morgan’s story was well-received and appreciated.

The project encourages people to post images of their birds once they have been found onto the Facebook page.

Below are some of the posts from people who found birds.



David Morley

2 October at 07:28 · 🌐

Yesterday as I was about to get off the train at Berowra on my way home from the city, I spotted this little guy in the corner of a seat. I took a closer look and saw that he was made as part of the [Lost Bird Found - Mental Health Project](#). A lot of care was taken to colour him by hand, a different pattern on each side. Importantly though this is an initiative to keep the conversation alive regarding mental health, and as it says on the tag, the bird symbolises freedom from depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. And I guess the time and care taken to colour the little fella is also representative of the time and care we as a society could also give to ensuring the conversation stays alive. Bravo [North Sydney Council](#) and the North Sydney Community for such an initiative!

#anxiety #depression #mentalhealth



Amy Croft ▸ Lost Bird Found - Mental Health Project

4 October at 14:27 · 🌐

Thank you for this beautiful little bird! My son and I found it after our trip to the library. We both love birds. This one has been lovingly created and has such a happy feel about him. We will treasure it! It also helped me start a conversation with my son about anxiety. It will act as a reminder to talk when he has worries. Thank you!



Michele Belfanti ▸ Lost Bird Found - Mental Health Project

8 October at 11:37 · 🌐

Thank you for my lovely bird, found at Stanton Library - her bright, cheerful colours make me feel happy 😊



The Lost Bird Found project continues to be well-received by the community, with increased growth and interest each year and for this reason it is anticipated the project will be delivered again in 2020.