

Flying-foxes at North Avoca

Engagement Summary

In June 2019, Central Coast Council successfully applied for funding from Local Government NSW (LGNSW) under the Flying-fox Grant Program, so that staff resources could be dedicated to investigating an issue at the North Avoca flying-fox camp.

The purpose of undertaking community consultation was to:

- Find out what impacts the residents within the designated zones were experiencing from the North Avoca Flying-fox Camp, and assist these residents to manage the negative impacts.
- Educate the residents about the camp management options and the laws that protect the Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Community consultation was undertaken in various forms throughout the project, including:

- Phone calls and emails with the residents on an ongoing basis.
- A drop-in information session, with subject matter experts to answer questions one-on-one.
- Face-to-face appointments with residents who wanted to have in-depth discussions.
- The organisation of mitigation measures.
- The delivery of an online flying-fox hub, that included a survey, frequently asked questions and answers, important links and documents, and the option to subscribe to flying-fox updates.

Engagement Results

At the conclusion of the project, Council conducted a survey that was available to 122 houses of North Avoca who were eligible for the mitigation measures. 21 residents responded.

The survey results revealed:

- 75% of respondents selected a 3/10 or less, for how they felt 12 months ago about living close to the permanent flying-fox camp in North Avoca
- 52% of respondents felt powerless when it came to mitigating the impacts they were experiencing from the flying-fox camp, with the main sentiment being that they felt like there was nothing they could do. 33% of respondents had already purchased a clothesline cover, or chose not to hang their washing outside. An additional 24% of residents had already purchased other mitigation measures such as scented candles for the smell, earplugs for the noise and a high-pressure washer for the droppings.
- 67% of respondents who did not receive funding from Council indicated that they chose not to because nothing on offer would help mitigate the issues they were experiencing.
- 67% of respondents of this survey received some form of funding from Council, be it a resource such as a high-pressure washer or car cover, or a reimbursement for double-glazed windows or an air-conditioning unit. 50% of these respondents received a high-pressure washer and 29% received a car cover.

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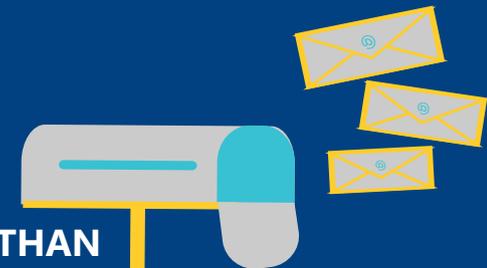


19 people attended a face-to-face community information session



MORE THAN 500

emails were sent to residents throughout this project



MORE THAN 550

letters were letterbox-dropped, updating residents on the project



Flying-foxes at North Avoca

Engagement Results

- The biggest issue residents wanted to mitigate was noise at 50%, followed by droppings at 43%.
- These respondents rated the resources they received as not very useful at mitigating the impacts – with 66% giving them a score of 2/10 or less for effectiveness. However, in contrast, 42% of the same set of residents say that they use their mitigation measure every day.
- The installation of an air-conditioner was rated 7/10 for usefulness in mitigating the noise and smell coming from the flying-fox camp (a partial reimbursement was supplied to eligible residents only).
- The installation of double-glazed windows was rated 6/10 for usefulness in mitigating the noise and smell coming from the flying-fox camp (a partial reimbursement was supplied to eligible residents only).
- There were mixed feelings as to how satisfied respondents were with the communication they received from Council during the consultation, with 36% being towards the unsatisfied end of the scale, 21% feeling neutral on the matter, and 43% towards the satisfied end of the scale.
- Almost half of the respondents (46%) did not feel that the funding program was useful at all.
- When asked what other services or materials would have been useful to include in the program, 63% of respondents listed moving the flying-foxes on (this is not a supported management option).
- The majority of the respondents are still either extremely or moderately concerned (79%) about the risk of contracting the Lyssavirus from the flying-foxes.
- 55% of the respondents say that they don't dislike flying-foxes, but they still want them moved on, and an additional 40% say that they dislike flying-foxes and want them moved on.

What's next?

Council are in ongoing discussions with Crown Lands as to how to manage the land that the flying-fox camp is located on.

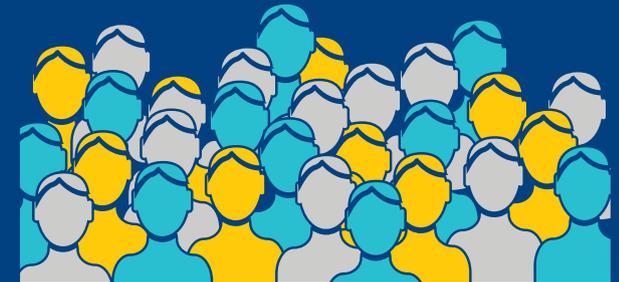
Moving forward, a camp-specific management plan would need to be developed before any management actions are undertaken (i.e. a North Avoca Flying-fox Camp Management Plan). This has been done at many other camps, such as Eurobodalla and East Cessnock – where the land owner, in partnership with the local community, develops a plan for the management of a specific camp. The purpose of the plan is to undertake appropriate actions (e.g. such as weeding, trimming of trees etc) to manage the vegetation, help with heat stress events, monitor and improve water quality, or other interventions.

Any resident who wants to stay informed of this news can do so by visiting www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/NAflying-foxes and clicking on "Stay Informed".



63

visits to the online flying-fox hub on Your Voice Our Coast



39

resources (high-pressure washers, car covers, clothesline covers and deodorisers) were distributed to eligible residents



21

survey responses received