



Central Coast Regional Animal Care Facility

CONSULTATION REPORT

December 2023



Executive Summary

Local government has a responsibility to promote responsible pet ownership within their Local Government Area with Animal Care Facilities playing an important role by reuniting lost pets with their owners and facilitating the adoption of both dogs and cats.

Central Coast Council (Council) is proposing to construct a new Regional Animal Care Facility (Proposed ACF) at Mardi to replace our now aging facilities at Erina and Charmhaven. The concept designs for the Proposed ACF were placed on public exhibition from 18 February and 13 March 2023 which included a welcoming reception area, meet and greet locations and a connected walking loop for trial dog walks as well as multiple enrichment zones for the animals to exercise, play and interact with potential owners, as well as to enhance the overall adoption process.

We asked the community to join us in this opportunity to help guide the final design by providing feedback via an online form, by adding comments to the interactive plans or by attending one of the in-person sessions held at Tuggerah Library.

This report provides an overview of the engagement activities undertaken by Council for the Proposed ACF.

What we heard

Council received a total of 98 comments and 353 reactions for the Proposed ACF and 94 percent support on its key features.

Feedback across the consultation activity revealed the following:

- There was overwhelming support for the Proposed ACF and its value to the region.
- The community were most interested in animal wellbeing and the environment.
- Community commentary commended the animal focused concept design.
- The community also offered constructive feedback on how to improve the designs.
- Concerns that a centralised location could increase travel times for residents.
- Concerns around funding and ability to build quick enough to meet demands.

Feedback received indicates overall support for the Proposed ACF with 55% of participants actively advocating for the project and an additional 40% of participants providing positive improvement ideas. Only 5% of participants said they were not supportive.

Community feedback also indicated 87% support for the proposed key features.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Central Coast currently has one of the highest rates of dog ownership in NSW and our Animal Care Facilities play an important role in supporting responsible pet ownership by reuniting lost pets with their owners and supporting the adoption of surrendered pets.

Council developed a concept design for a proposed centrally located Regional Animal Care Facility at 253 Old Maitland Road, Mardi as the existing Animal Care Facilities at Erina and Charmhaven have reached the end of their functional life and are no longer fit for purpose.

The proposed site at 253 Old Maitland Road, Mardi has been identified as the preferred central location for a new Regional Animal Care Facility that will provide enough space for animal wellbeing, enrichment and exercise. The Proposed ACF will cater for the current animal holding requirements of the Charmhaven and Erina Animal Care Facilities, as well as considering the future needs of the entire Central Coast Local Government Area.

The concept design for the Proposed ACF includes multiple enrichment zones for the animals to exercise, play and interact with potential owners. To improve the adoption process, the concept plans included a welcoming reception area, meet and greet locations and a connected walking loop for trial dog walks for prospective owners. The proposed cat enclosures have a contemporary design that will maximise natural light, while the dog kennels will each have an indoor and outdoor space in their individual kennels.

Between 18 February and 13 March 2023, Council invited the community to share their thoughts on the proposed location and concept design of the Proposed ACF.

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Inform the community about the project,
- Seek feedback on the project to inform the concept design, and
- Understand community values and preferences for the site.

Timeline of the consultation was:

- December 2021 – Preliminary investigations,
- June 2022 – Concept design developed,
- June 2022 – Key impacted stakeholders notified of proposed site selection,
- 1 February – 1 March 2023 – Public Exhibition of concept design, and
- 2023 – Further site investigations and DA preparation.

1.2 The project

Key themes that were considered in the concept design include:

Animal wellbeing

The concept design includes multiple enrichment zones for the animals to exercise, play and meet prospective owners. The dog kennels are proposed to exceed minimum size requirements in the concept design, and each have an indoor and outdoor space. The cat enclosures will be of modern design that will maximise natural light. Spacious consultation rooms will provide opportunity for microchipping or vet visits, and specialised dog bathing rooms will ensure staff have sufficient space and equipment to keep each animal clean.

Accessibility

The proposed site is safely accessible by car and is centrally located with quick access to the M1 motorway to effectively service the wider Central Coast region. The Proposed ACF will be accessible via connected concrete pathways, disabled car spaces and accessible facilities.

Welcoming design

With a focus on creating a welcoming experience for prospective owners, the concept design includes ample public parking, an inviting reception space, meet and greet areas and a connected walking loop for trial dog walks.

Environmentally focused

The Proposed ACF will comply with modern environmental standards and include two large water tanks, on site sewer management system and solar panels that will increase the sustainability of the facility long term.

Key features of the concept design for Proposed ACF include:

- Multiple enrichment and exercise zones for the animals,
- Spacious kennels,
- Welcoming administration building,
- Modern cat enclosures, maximising natural light,
- Meet and greet areas for prospective adopters,
- Walking path for exercise and one on one trial walks,
- Public car park with disabled car space included in scope,
- Connected by accessible concrete pathways,
- Quick access to the M,
- Solar power for sustainability,
- Double kennels for bonded pairs and Mums and pups to be together,
- Separate entrance for seized or behavioural dogs for ease of transfer,
- Specialised 'dog washroom' to be used for dog washing and grooming,
- Microchipping rooms, and
- Isolation enclosures.

The concept designs can be viewed in **Appendix A**.

2 Engagement approach

2.1 Aims and objectives

The purpose of community engagement was to:

- Inform the community and key stakeholders (including adjoining property owners) about the need for the Proposed ACF,
- Provide clear information on the opportunities and considerations for the project and how their feedback will influence the scope and deliverables, and
- Deliver transparent and authentic engagement opportunities for the community to share their thoughts, ideas and opinions for the project.

2.2 Our engagement framework

Consultation has been designed in accordance with Council's Engagement Framework. This framework is available to view [here](#).

The framework provides direction to effectively engage and communicate with the community and stakeholders and provides guidance on how to undertake engagement activities and what steps should be considered.

A place-based approach allows the community and Council to work more closely and collaboratively in practical engagement. Community involvement ensures balanced decision making through appropriate levels, timing, and methods of engagement.

Council's Engagement Framework ensures that community and stakeholder engagement is consistent and easy to understand to help inform people of an issue so they may decide whether to participate if they choose.

2.3 How we consulted

Consultation method

All project information and FAQs were hosted on [Your Voice Our Coast](#) where details of project officers are also available for any queries. During the consultation period, the community were invited to share their feedback via an [interactive mapping tool](#) where they were able to explore the suggested concept designs, comment on, like or dislike proposed features and raise ideas, issues, or suggestions. Feedback was accepted between 1 February and 1 March 2023.

A screenshot of the interactive map can be found in **Appendix B**.

Engagement activities

Council invited the community to share their thoughts, ideas and feedback on the proposed site and the concept design, to inform future decision-making for the project.

The community consultation occurred between 1 February and 13 March 2023 and included:

Community drop-in sessions drop in session at Tuggerah Library:

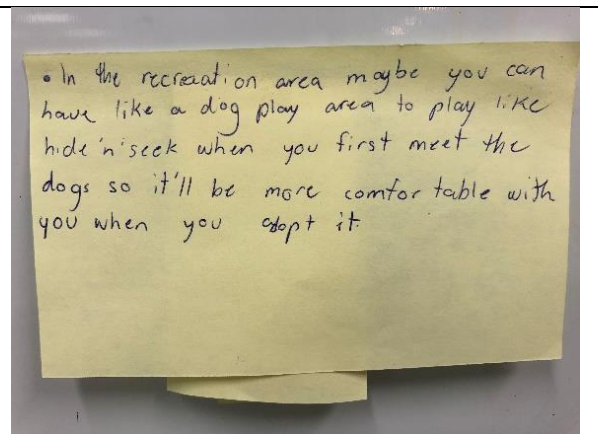
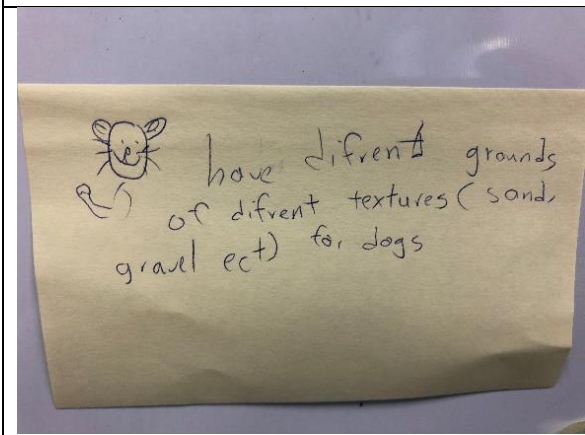
- 9:30am - 10:30am Tuesday 7 March (5 attendees)
- 3:30pm - 4:30pm Wednesday 8 March (3 attendees)

Regional Animal Care Facility at Central Coast Pets Day Out

- 18 February 2023 Pop up tent at Large scale community event with over 100 attendees.

Regional Animal Care Facility - Uni Steps Program (year 7)

- 24 February High School workshop with 15 year 7 students.



Promotional activities

We carried out promotion of the consultation to ensure the community and stakeholders were aware of the opportunity to participate.

Media Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 February 2023 <p>A copy of the media release can be found in Appendix C</p>
Media Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 February 2023 NBN TV interview• 3 February 2023 Coast Community News <p>A copy of the news article can be found in Appendix D</p>
Mailouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letters sent to 55 to key stakeholders and surrounding residents
Your Voice Our Coast website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project page published on 1 February 2023 with 438 visits• Interactive mapping tool open 1 February to 1 March 2023
Social media posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facebook posts: 1 February, 23 February, 1 March & 8 March• Instagram posts: 1 February, 23 February, 1 March & 8 March <p>Copies of social media posts can be found in Appendix E</p>
eNewsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 February 2023 Coast Connect eNews Feature Sent to 12,794 recipients• 13 February 2023 Direct Email to Engagement Mailing List Sent to 2,750 recipients <p>Copies of the eNewsletters can be found in Appendix F</p>

3 What we heard

3.1 Results

Between 18 February and 13 March 2023, Council invited the community to share their thoughts on the proposed location and concept design for the Proposed ACF.

Key features

The community were invited to have their say on an interactive version of the concept designs with comments, discussions and reactions to the concept plan and its key features.

Council received a total of 98 comments and 353 reactions for the Proposed ACF and 94 percent support on its key features.

Feedback across the consultation activity revealed the following:

- There was overwhelming support for the Proposed ACF and its value to the region.
- The community were most interested in animal wellbeing and the environment.
- Community commentary commended the animal focused concept design.
- The community also offered constructive feedback on how to improve the designs.
- Concerns that a centralised location could increase travel times for residents.
- Concerns around funding and ability to build quick enough to meet demands.

Feedback received indicates overall support for the Proposed ACF with 55% of participants actively advocating for the project and an additional 40% of participants providing positive improvement ideas. Only 5% of participants said they were not supportive.

Community feedback also indicated 87% support for the proposed key features.

See Figure 1 Frequency of common themes mentioned.

Figure 1: Support of key features

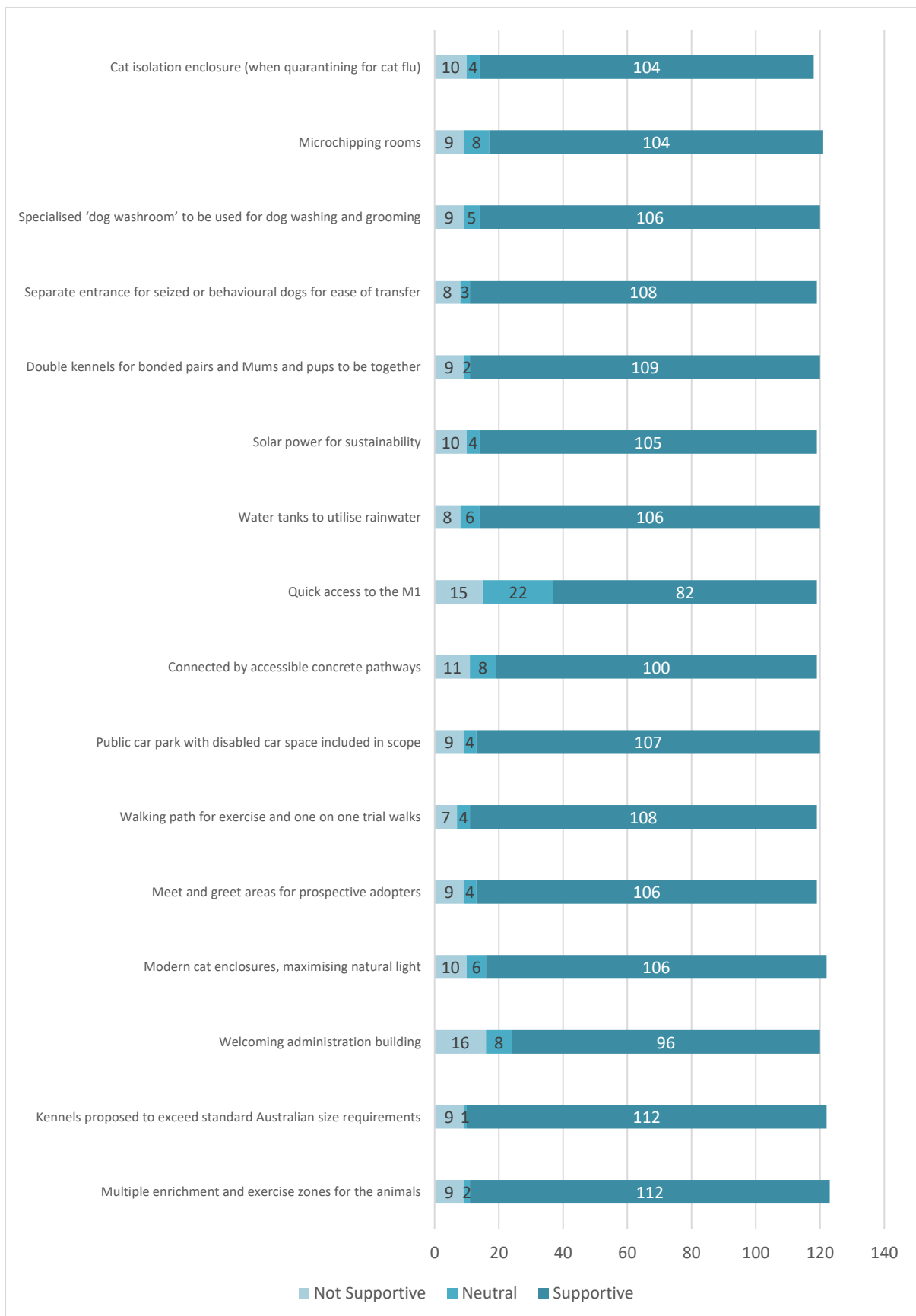
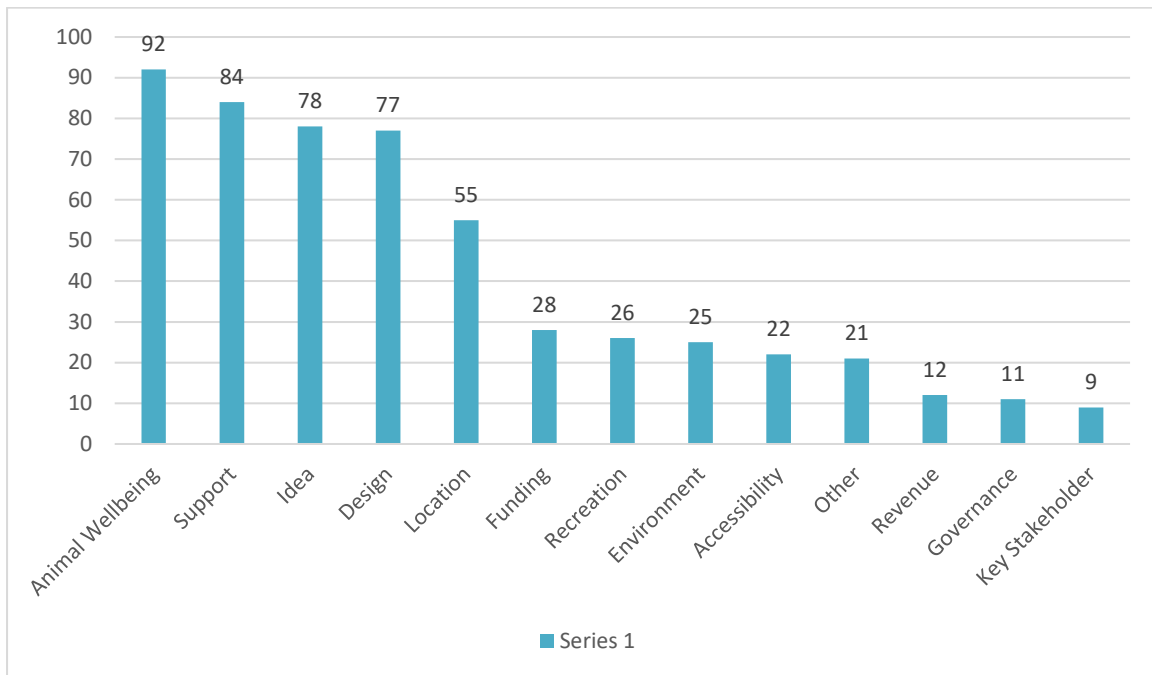
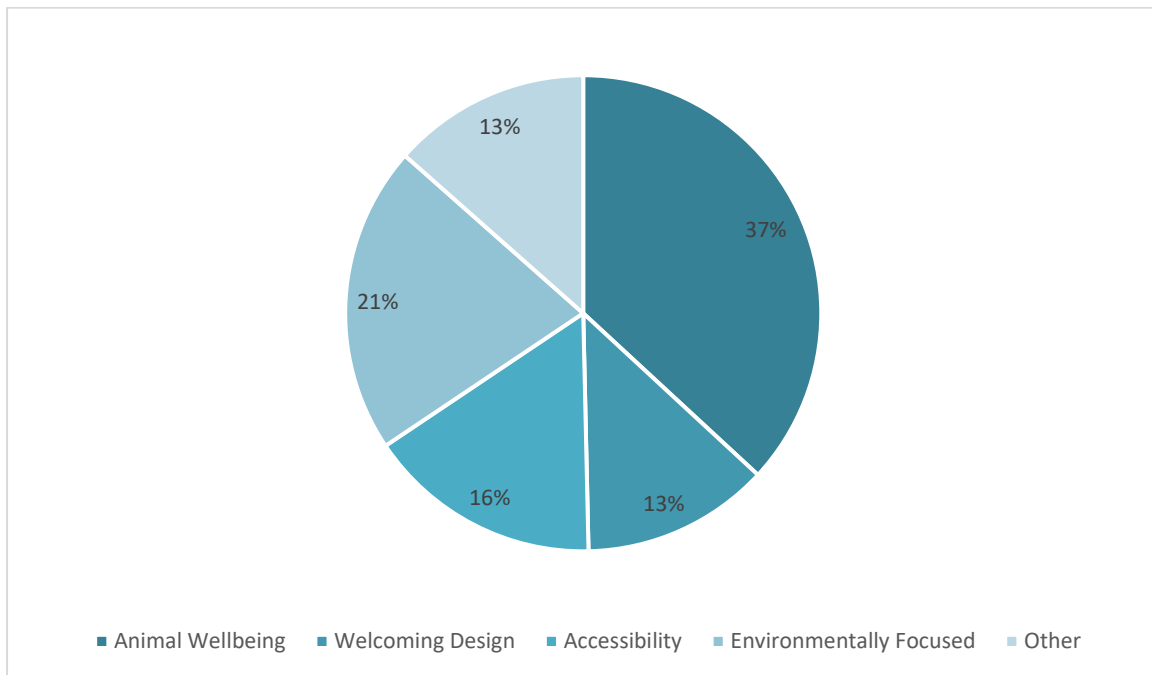


Figure 2: Key themes mentioned



Animal Wellbeing	92	17%
Design	77	14%
Accessibility	22	4%
Location	55	10%
Environment	25	5%
Recreation	26	5%
Idea	78	14%
Funding	28	5%
Revenue	12	2%
Governance	11	2%
Key Stakeholder	9	2%
Support	84	16%
Other	21	4%

Figure 3: Concept design themes



Animal Wellbeing	104	37%
Welcoming Design	36	13%
Accessibility	45	16%
Environmentally Focused	59	21%
Other	38	13%

3.2 Sample of comments from consultation

Below is a sample of comments respondents provided via the interactive map:

"I think this is a great concept and much needed on the coast"

"This design is absolutely fantastic. Love love love it."

"I think it is a wonderful design and an excellent spot to build it."

"A brilliant concept design, a huge improvement on the current aging facility."

"This is a great looking facility and represents a significant improvement on current facilities. Can't wait to see it built!"

"Really love to see this proposal as I feel it would be a game changing, much needed facility for our animals here on the coast."

"This is amazing news. To have a purpose-built facility that supports and nurtures animals who are in crisis, abused or those whose loving families are no longer able to care for them is a welcomed needed service. Thank you"

"I believe this is a much-needed facility for both the welfare of animals and adoption rates. I feel an animal care facility such as this is crucial for welcoming potential adopters in and therefore increasing the number of animals rescued. This welcoming, safe and sustainable care facility will provide the animals better living conditions, as well as invite potential adopters in."

3.3 Key findings from consultation

The below topics were highly engaged on and greatly valued by the community:

- 276** Community comments received,
- 95%** Active and passive support for the project,
- 87%** Support for project key features (see Key Features),
- 84** Comments of support for the project, and
- 78** Constructive ideas provided.

Animal Wellbeing, Design and **Location** were the key themes raised by the community,

Attractors were most interested in animal wellbeing and elements of the Concept Design, and

Detractors were most concerned about location and funding.

Feedback to these themes can be found in **Section 4**.

4 Feedback

Due to the large volume and variety of content contained within community feedback, not every issue or theme was able to be included and responded to in the following table, however all feedback has been read and has been considered by the project team.

Table A Issues and responses

Theme	Topic	Feedback
Noise	Noise impact to surrounding residents	An acoustic report will be undertaken as part of the Development Application. The layout of the facility was strategically planned to lessen any noise impact to surrounding residents.
Location	Too far from top and bottom of the Coast	Council staff are investigating the feasibility of drop off locations at aligning Council depots across the coast for those unable to travel to Mardi.
Shade	Shade in recreation areas	Additional shade to recreation areas will be considered in future iterations of the design.
Isolation	Dog Isolation areas not identified	Dog isolation areas are a requirement of animal care facilities and will be included in future iterations of the design.
Animal enrichment	Obstacles to enhance animal enrichment	Play and agility obstacles will be included in future iterations of the design.

5 Next steps

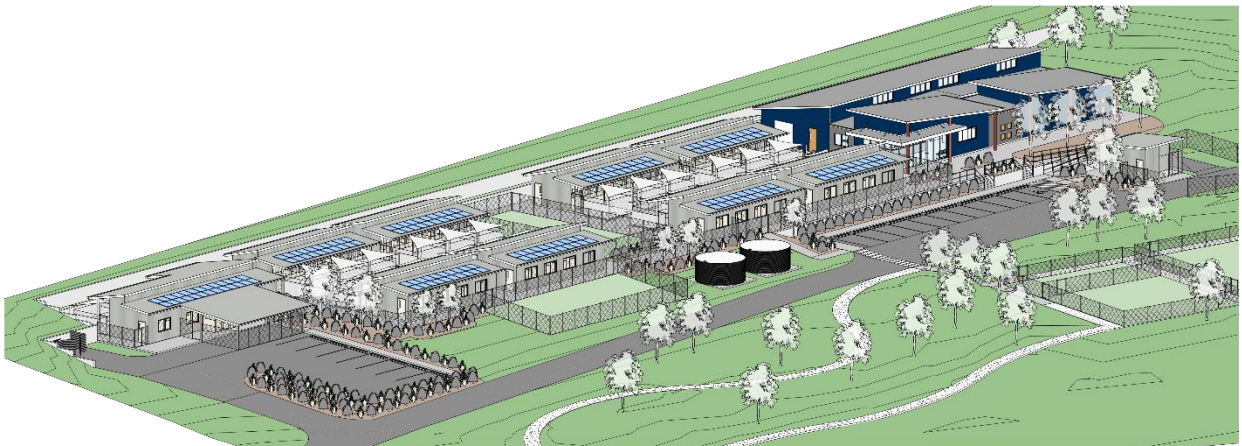
Our project team were excited to see high levels of community support for this project and are currently reviewing all community feedback in detail.

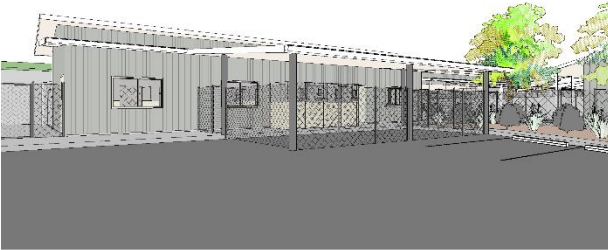
Insights from all feedback provided during this consultation will be used to guide the final designs and we will keep the community updated as the project progresses.

It's important to note that while we do our best to develop projects to meet the needs and requests of the community and stakeholders, technical constraints, costs, and the overarching project objectives must also be considered to deliver a project that is safe, functional and best balances the competing needs of all those affected including the environment.

6 Appendices

Appendix A –Regional Animal Care Facility Concept Plans





Appendix B – Interactive Concept Design



Appendix C – Media Release

Central Coast Council Media Release 1 February 2023

Exciting proposal for a new Regional Animal Care Facility now open for community comment

Central Coast Council is inviting the community to provide feedback on the proposed location and concept design for a new centrally located Regional Animal Care Facility at Mardi.

253 Old Maitland Road, Mardi is the preferred site due to its central location, ease of access and provision of space for animal wellness, enrichment and exercise.

Council Director Environment and Planning, Alice Howe said the proposed facility will cater for the current and future animal holding requirements of the Charmhaven and Erina Animal Care Facilities.

“The Central Coast currently has the highest rate of dog ownership in NSW and our Animal Care Facilities play an important role in supporting responsible pet ownership by reuniting lost pets with their owners and supporting the adoption of surrendered pets,” Dr Howe said.

“The concept design for the proposed facility includes multiple enrichment zones for the animals to exercise, play and interact with potential owners.

“To improve the adoption process we have also included a welcoming reception area, meet and greet locations and a connected walking loop for trial dog walks for prospective owners.

“The proposed cat enclosures will have a contemporary design that will maximise natural light and increase welfare, while the dog kennels will each have an indoor and outdoor space.”

Council Administrator, Rik Hart said he encourages the community to share their thoughts on the proposed facility.

“Your ideas and feedback on the proposed site and the concept design will inform further decision-making for this project,” Mr Hart said.

The community is invited to have their say on the proposed Regional Animal Care Facility location and concept design from 1 February to 1 March 2023, at yourvoiceourcoast.com/ccracf

ENDS

Appendix D – News Article



Have your say on proposed new animal care facility

TOPICS: Central Coast Council | Mardi | Regional Animal Care Facility



The proposed design of the new facility

FEBRUARY 3, 2023

Central Coast Council is inviting feedback from the community on the proposed location and concept design for a new centrally located Regional Animal Care Facility at Mardi.

The preferred site, at 253 Old Maitland Rd, has been chosen due to its central location, ease of access and provision of space for animal wellness, enrichment and exercise.

Council Director Environment and Planning Alice Howe said the proposed facility will cater for the current and future animal holding requirements of the Charmhaven and Erina Animal Care Facilities.

“The Central Coast currently has the highest rate of dog ownership in NSW and our Animal Care Facilities play an important role in supporting responsible pet ownership by reuniting lost pets with their owners and supporting the adoption of surrendered pets,” Howe said.

“The concept design for the proposed facility includes multiple enrichment zones for the animals to exercise, play and interact with potential owners.

To improve the adoption process we have also included a welcoming reception area, meet and greet locations and a connected walking loop for trial dog walks for prospective owners.

“The proposed cat enclosures will have a contemporary design that will maximise natural light and increase welfare, while the dog kennels will each have an indoor and outdoor space.”

Council Administrator Rik Hart ideas and feedback from the community on the proposed site and concept design would inform further decision-making for the project.

Submissions will be accepted until March 1 at yourvoiceourcoast.com/ccracf.

Source:
Media release, Feb 1
Central Coast Council

Appendix E – Social Media Posts

All social media posts with Reach and Engagements

Title	Date published	Status	Reach	Engagements	Likes and reactions	Comments	Shares
Want to have your say on what's going on in the Cent... Central Coast Council	8 March 14:00	Boost post	4.8K Accounts Centre accounts re...	319 Post engagements	21 Reactions	6 Comments	5 Shares
Want to have your say on what's going on in the Cent... centralcoastcouncil	8 March 14:00	Boost post	966 Accounts Centre accounts re...	--	36 Likes	0 Comments	0 Shares
Did you miss out on sharing your thoughts on ... Central Coast Council	1 March 15:30	Boost post	5.7K Accounts Centre accounts re...	181 Post engagements	18 Reactions	2 Comments	3 Shares
Did you miss out on sharing your thoughts on ... centralcoastcouncil	1 March 15:30	Boost post	1.1K Accounts Centre accounts re...	--	20 Likes	0 Comments	0 Shares
Did you know that you can have your say 24/7 throug... Central Coast Council	23 February 16:00	Boost post	3.7K Accounts Centre accounts re...	196 Post engagements	15 Reactions	12 Comments	4 Shares
Did you know that you can have your say 24/7 throug... centralcoastcouncil	23 February 16:00	Boost post	786 Accounts Centre accounts re...	--	8 Likes	0 Comments	0 Shares
You're invited to share your thoughts on the proposed lo... centralcoastcouncil	2 February 15:01	Boost post	1.7K Accounts Centre accounts re...	--	38 Likes	0 Comments	1 Shares
You're invited to share your thoughts on the proposed lo... Central Coast Council	2 February 14:09	Boost post	2.5K Accounts Centre accounts re...	96 Post engagements	31 Reactions	0 Comments	5 Shares

Facebook Post 2 February 2023

Performance

Reach	Engagements	Negative interactions
Total 2,507	Reactions 31	Total 0
Organic 2,507 (100%)	Comments 0	Unique 0
Paid 0 (0%)	Shares 5	

[View Details](#)

Instagram Post 2 February 2023

Performance

Reach	Engagements	Negative interactions
Total 1,721	Likes 38	
	Comments 0	Unique --

Facebook Post 23 February 2023

Central Coast Council
Published by HubSpot · 23 February

👉 Did you know that you can have your say 24/7 through our online consultation hub 'Your Voice Our Coast'?

In the last year, more than 6,000 contributions from our community were submitted both online and across 60 engagement sessions to shape over 50 projects, plans and strategies.

We're currently seeking your input on the following projects and plans:
... See more

Performance

Reach		Engagements		Negative interactions	
Total	3,654	Reactions	15	Total	1
Organic	3,654 (100%)	Comments	12	Unique	1
Paid	0 (0%)	Shares	4		
View Details					

Instagram Post 23 February 2023

Instagram

centralcoastcouncil

centralcoastcouncil 📍 Did you know that you can have your say 24/7 through our online consultation h... more

Performance

Reach		Engagements		Negative interactions	
Total	786	Likes	8		
		Comments	0	Unique	--

Facebook Post 1 March 2023

Central Coast Council · Published by HubSpot · 1 March

Did you miss out on sharing your thoughts on the proposed location and concept design for a new Regional Animal Care Facility in Mardi? We've extended the consultation period until Monday 13 March!

This will allow more community members to share their feedback, and attend face-to-face community drop-in sessions to have their questions about the proposed facility answered!

Community drop-in sessions will take place at Tuggerah Library at: ... See more

Performance

Reach		Engagements		Negative interactions	
Total	5,732	Reactions	18	Total	0
Organic	5,732 (100%)	Comments	2	Unique	0
Paid	0 (0%)	Shares	3		
View Details					

Instagram Post 1 March 2023

Instagram

centralcoastcouncil

centralcoastcouncil Did you miss out on sharing your thoughts on the proposed location and co... more

Performance

Reach		Engagements		Negative interactions	
Total	1,054	Likes	20	Unique	--
		Comments	0		

Facebook Post 8 March 2023


Central Coast Council
Published by HubSpot · 8 March · 🌐

👉 Want to have your say on what's going on in the Central Coast? You can do this 24/7 through our online consultation hub 'Your Voice Our Coast'?

In the last year, more than 6,200 contributions from our community have been submitted both online and across 60 engagement sessions to shape over 50 projects, plans and strategies.

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... [See more](#)





Performance

Reach 📍

Total	4,754
Organic	4,754 (100%)
Paid	0 (0%)

Engagements 📍

Reactions	21
Comments	6
Shares	5

Negative interactions 📍


Total	1
Unique	1

[View Details](#)

Instagram Post 8 March 2023

Instagram

centralcoastcouncil



centralcoastcouncil 📍 Want to have your say on what's going on in the Central Coast? You can do this ... [more](#)

Performance

Reach 📍

Total	966
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Engagements 📍

Likes	36
Comments	0

Negative interactions 📍

Unique	--
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Appendix F – eNewsletters

Coast Connect Feature – 1 February 2022


Coast Connect
1 February 2023



Exciting proposal for new Regional Animal Care Facility now on public exhibition

You're invited to share your thoughts on the proposed location and concept design for a new centrally located Regional Animal Care Facility at Mardi.

Our Animal Care Facilities play an important role in supporting responsible pet ownership by reuniting lost pets with their owners and supporting the adoption of surrendered pets.

Concept designs for the proposed facility include multiple enrichment zones for the animals to exercise, play and interact with potential owners. The proposed cat enclosures will have a contemporary design that will maximise natural light and increase welfare, while the dog kennels will each have an indoor and outdoor space.

Your ideas and feedback on the proposed site and the concept design will further inform decision-making for this project.

Have your say by 1 March

Direct eNews to Engagement Mailing List - 13 February 2023


Regional Animal Care Facility
Have Your Say



Proposed new Regional Animal Care Facility

You're invited to share your thoughts on the proposed location and concept design for a new centrally located Regional Animal Care Facility at Mardi.

Our Animal Care Facilities play an important role in supporting responsible pet ownership by reuniting lost pets with their owners and the adoption of surrendered pets.

The concept designs for the proposed facility include multiple enrichment zones for the animals to exercise, play and interact with potential owners - enhancing the overall adoption process.

Have your say by Wednesday 1 March! Your ideas and feedback will further inform decision-making for this project.

Share feedback