



Sustainable Futures Festival

04 JUNE – 11 SEPTEMBER 2022

EVALUATION SUMMARY



econetwork
port stephens

The Sustainable Futures Festival aimed to create positive change, with innovative and practical solutions for a sustainable and regenerative world, working in partnership with local communities, businesses and governments.

We held the festival between June and September 2022. It culminated with a festival day on 11 September that involved displays, speakers and

a marketplace for innovative technologies that are sustainable and environmentally sound.

This bulletin summarises the findings from an evaluation conducted in collaboration with The University of Newcastle and drawing from attendance data, a confidential survey, feedback from children, media monitoring, communication logs, a waste audit and facilitated discussions.

What were the main benefits of the festival?

With over 1000 people attending the festival and with the 94% people surveyed indicating they had a positive experience, the top three benefits cited were:

1. Creating a positive atmosphere for learning about sustainability

The experience of interacting as a likeminded community, talking about practical sustainability, finding entertaining ways of learning and showcasing alternative ways of thinking and doing.

2. Supporting the progression of St Philip's Christian College and Tomaree High School towards sustainability

EcoNetwork Port Stephens was proud to learn that St Philip's Christian College has strengthened their recycling program and that Tomaree High School's sustainability and environment program has been revitalised as a result of the festival.

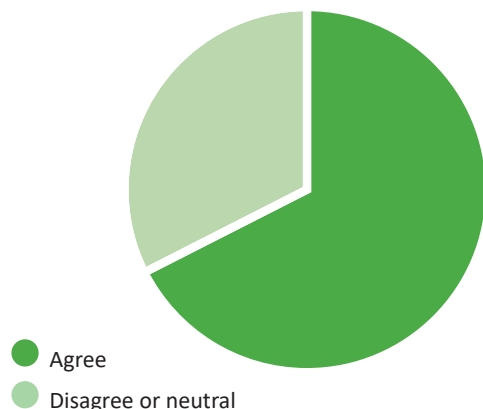
3. Connecting local community groups and businesses with research and innovation expertise

EcoNetwork is aware that new technologies developed in research settings may have practical applications locally, in collaboration with community groups as a result of introductions that occurred at the festival.



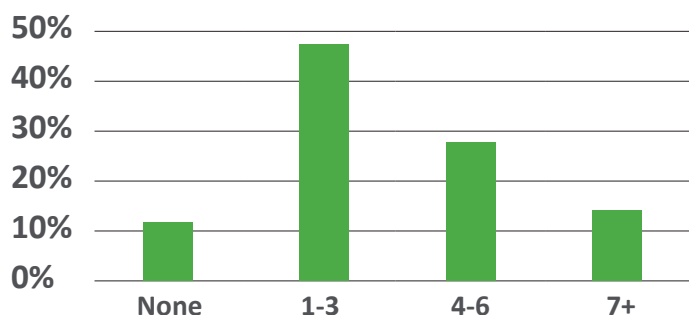
Did attendees engage with, learn about and plan to adopt practical technologies?

70% intended to adopt sustainable practices



Did businesses, affiliates and attendees form networks?

Almost 90% made connections



How could the festival improve?

Many survey respondents did not respond to the question about improvements or they replied with statements such as:

'Couldn't fault them' 'Keep up the good work'
'Great festival' 'Don't think they could'
'Location was great' 'Great as is'
'It was excellent overall' 'It was a great day'

Reponses from the children also included:

'Everything that was here' 'Everything and more friends here'
'More of the same' 'Same as what it is today' 'Everything'
'It was awesome' 'The kids activities here were great'

The top four suggested improvements were:

1. Increase the quality and quantity of food options
2. Increase the reach and variety of advertising and marketing
3. Improve the layout to enhance accessibility and interactions between attendees and stallholders
4. Increase the entertainment options and activities targeted at older children and young adults

Survey respondent:
Professor Veena
 made us more aware of
 the huge potential of
 recycled goods and more
 aware of our own
 recycling



Rob McCann,
South Pacific Sustainability, said:

/// Just wanted to give you and the rest of EcoNetwork PS a wrap. That was one of the best sustainability events I have been to (and I've been to a lot). To my delight there was no corporate PR, no green washing, no 'empty suits'. Just great people, grass roots innovations and a very high level of expertise and knowledge. Exactly what an event like this should be. Talks were all excellent and the whole event ran really smoothly. ///



Recommendations

- Hold another festival as soon as possible to capitalise on the momentum generated at this successful inaugural event
- Follow up on ways that EcoNetwork can continue to connect local community groups and businesses with research and innovation expertise
- Consider how to further promote the objectives of EcoNetwork Port Stephens by capitalising on increased awareness following the festival, particularly in light of the upcoming 30-year anniversary celebrations

EcoNetwork Port Stephens is a conservation, sustainability and natural heritage network. We are a not-for-profit, non-party political and 100% volunteer-run conservation organisation. Our vision is for ecologically sustainable communities existing in harmony with the natural environment. We acknowledge the Worimi People as the traditional owners and custodians of this land and water where we live, work and learn.

EcoNetwork Port Stephens is grateful to our generous sponsors Port Stephens Council, Hunter Water, Hunter Region Landcare Network (Hunter Local Land Service & Australian Government National Landcare Program), Salamander Bay Recycling, Boomerang Bags Raymond Terrace, Boomerang Park Preservation Group, Marine Parks Association and many community groups and eco-businesses.



National
Landcare
Program



Local Land
Services



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL



For more information:

www.ecops.au

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