



E2: Focus on environmental volunteering

Caring for and Connecting with Country at Sydney Olympic Park

National Volunteering Conference 2023

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Sydney Olympic Park Authority

Acknowledgement



The seeds of an idea



Sydney Olympic Park



Wangal Country



Historical Background



Historical Themes

- Geological
- Indigenous
- Colonial
- Industrial
- Naval
- Remediation
- Olympic
- Post Olympic

The Natural Environment



Biodiversity

- 400+ native plant species
- 250 native animal species
- 93 bird species
- 13 reptile species
- 12 microbat species
- 6 frog species
- 3 endangered ecological communities
- 2 possum species

The People and Place Today



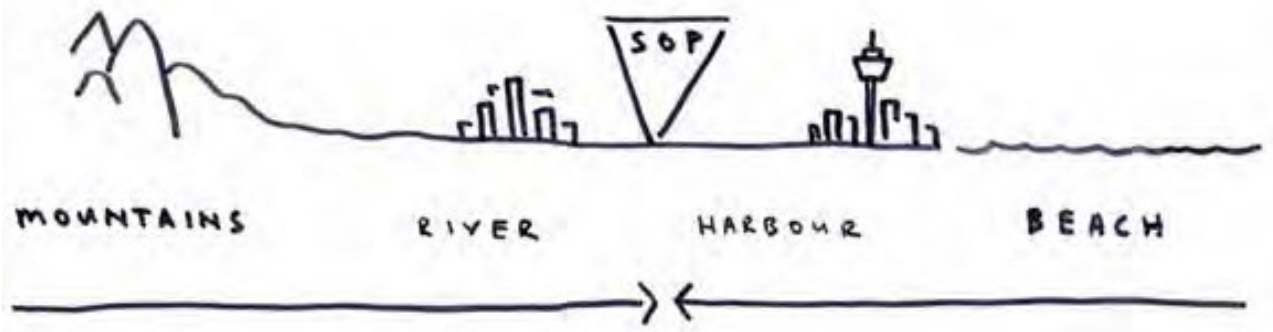
Annually

- 10 million visitors
- 5,000 events
- 50 major event days

In 2021

- 13,000 workers
- 5,000 additional casual workers
- 5,800 residents

The Regional Context



Sydney Olympic Park:

- is centrally located between the CBD & Parramatta
- will be connected by 2030 with a station on the Sydney Metro West Line

Demographic of Resident Population

5,600

residents
in 2020-21

31 years

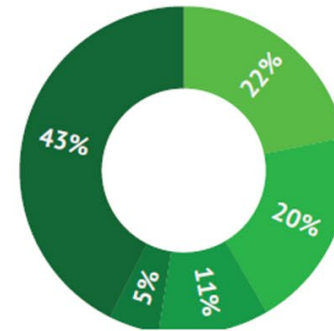
median age

41.7%

of residents aged
between 25-34 y.o.

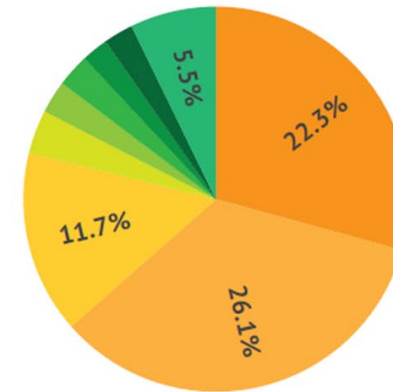
Resident birthplaces

- Australia
- China
- South Korea
- India
- Other



Languages spoken at home

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ● English | ● Dravidian |
| ● Chinese | ● Middle Eastern Semitic |
| ● Korean | ● Iberian Romance |
| ● Iranic | ● Indo-Aryan |
| ● Southeast Asian Austronesian | |



High Density Neighbourhoods



2050 Vision and Strategy



Community Consultation



Identified Desired Outcomes:

- Informed, engaged and connected community
- Innovative activations, programs and events that contribute to localism
- Community building & custodianship

Existing Caring for Country Opportunities



Eco Friends Program

- Partner organisations whose volunteer members conduct ecological surveys contributing to the data set that informs management practices

Existing Caring for Country Opportunities



Park Care

The Park Care Program includes an environmental clean-up with place based talk, supervised by Park Rangers.

Participants:

- community groups
- corporate - for social responsibility activities
- casual attendees at advertised sessions

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The Proposal

- Raise awareness of the value of natural spaces
- Facilitate community activities to improve habitat value, biodiversity and amenity of project area.

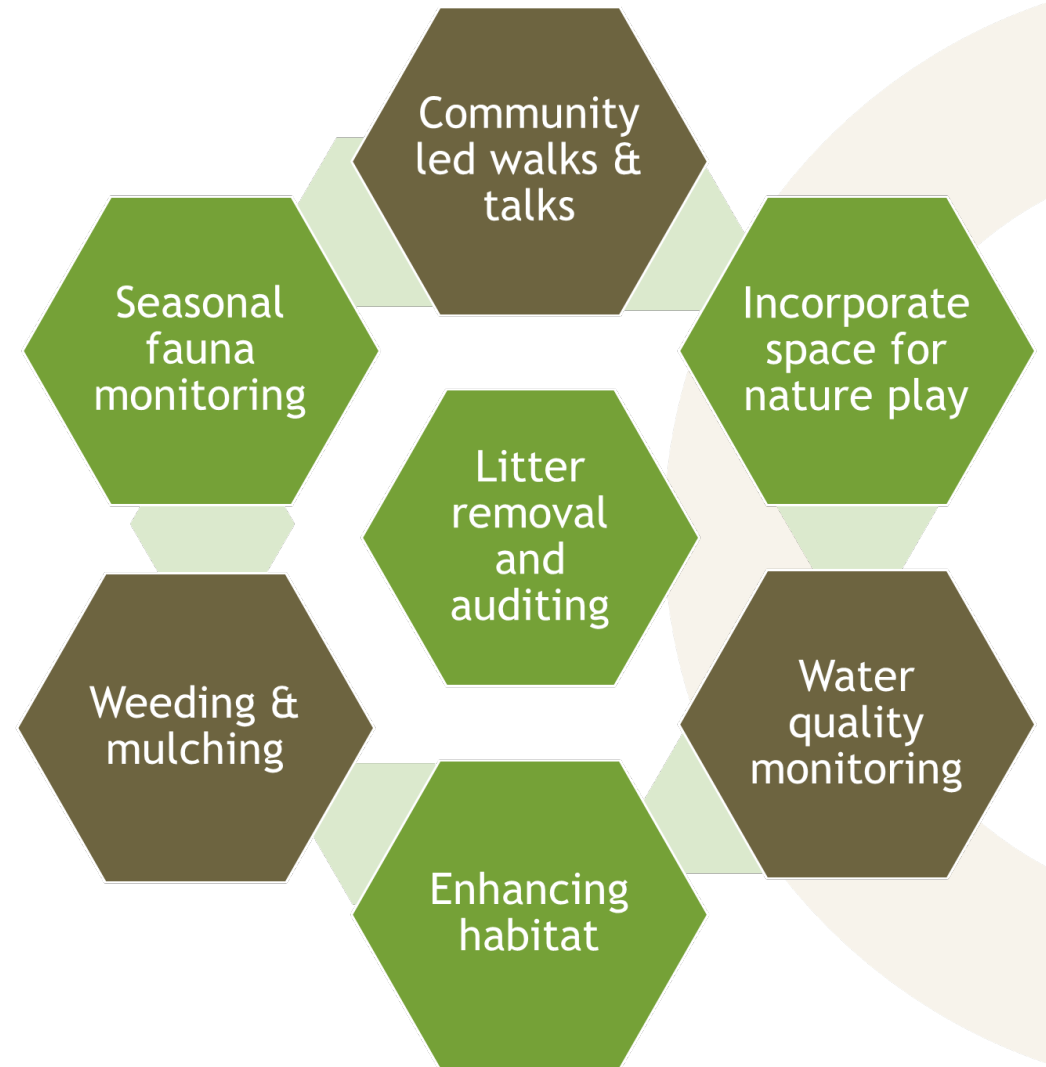
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Key Participants

- Resident and Neighbours of Sydney Olympic Park
- SOPA staff and Contractors
- Newington Public School, Wentworth Point Public School and Victoria Avenue Public School

Supporters/contributors

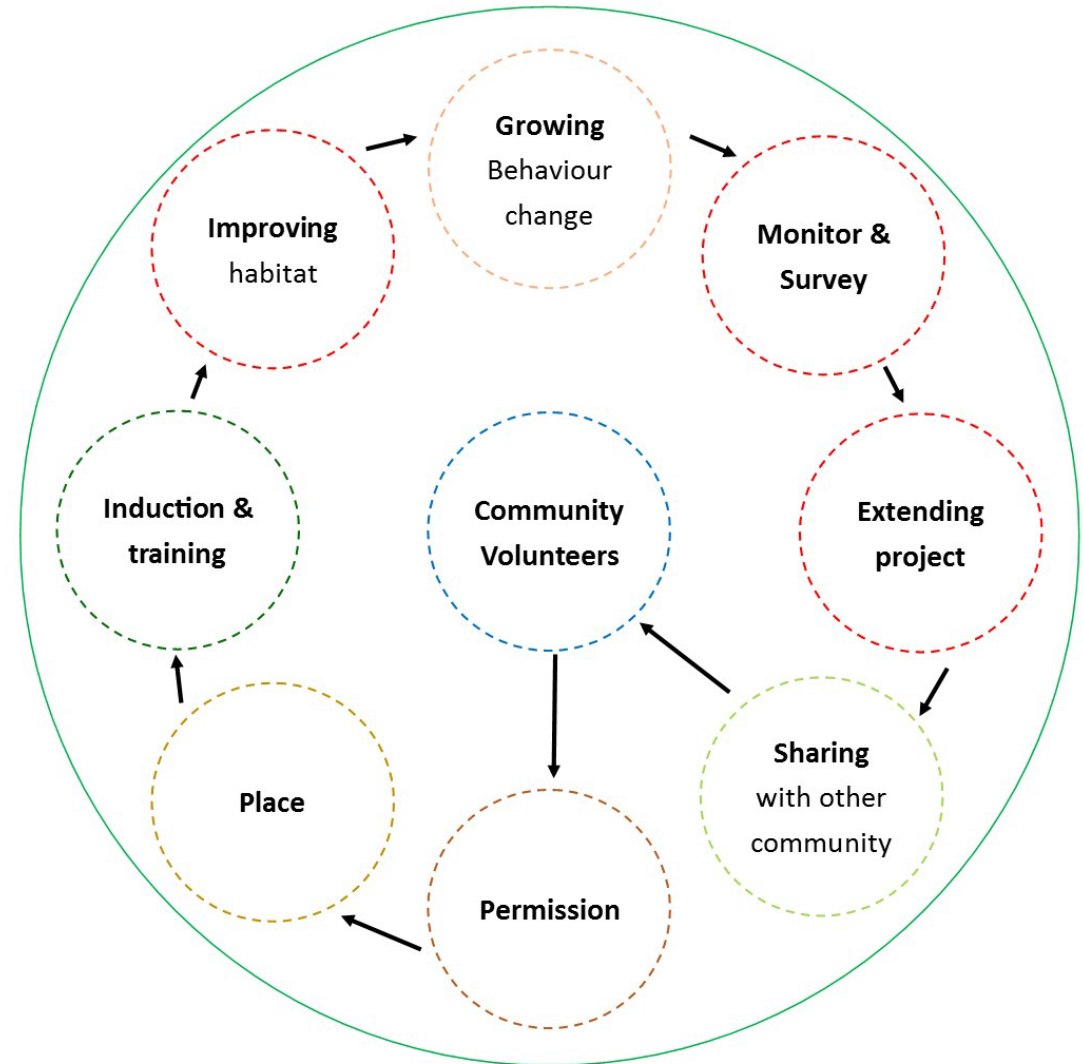
- Streamwatch
- AUSMAP
- Parramatta River Catchment Group
- City of Parramatta Council
- and more.....



Neighbours Nurturing Nature

Project Model

- Community Programs



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Project Model

- Schools Programs



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Nurture the Seedling

- Organisational support
- Commitment from partners
- Grant funding - NSW Environmental Trust
- Environmental Education Grant
- Community Interest

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Progress

- Received grant from the NSW Environmental Trust
- Recruitment of Assistant Project Officer
- Connected with other Volunteer Program Managers in DPE
- Created a Project EOI on our community engagement platform
- Delivered First Pilot Year:
 - Community Program
 - Schools Program
- Evaluation
- Resumed activities in 2023 at our year 1 site

#MySOPengage

SydneyOlympicPark 

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Get Involved - Neighbours Nurturing Nature Volunteer Project

Bringing the community together to care for Sydney Olympic Park's natural spaces and enhance habitat for endangered and threatened wildlife.

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Neighbours Nurturing Nature is for you and your community

The Neighbours Nurturing Nature Volunteer Project is about establishing ongoing opportunities for community members to contribute to the care, improvement and protection of the Parklands. Interested? Read further to get involved.

What's in it for you?

A chance to get involved in practical and worthwhile projects that will foster guardianship of the Parklands, wetlands and waterways of Sydney Olympic Park, while also connecting with other people in the local community. This new Park Care project will allow us to deliver on the [Sydney Olympic Park Community Development Plan](#), which identified engagement with the environment as a key community priority.

We want your ideas and inspiration!

There is an opportunity for everyone to help. If you have a pair of helping hands, have skills that you're willing to share, free time, energy, passion, or just want to do something different every once in a while, there is a place for you.

Call for Volunteers

Would you like to help? Send through an Expression of Interest and we'll add you to our semi regular mailing.

[Apply here](#)

Project news



3 January 2023 / [GET INVOLVED - NEIGHBOURS NURTURING NATURE VOLUNTEER PROJECT](#)

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Pilot Project Area at Teal Pond



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Challenges

- Keeping to the project concept that was funded
- Maintaining volunteer motivation
- Navigating the “rules” and “ownership” of the parklands
- Fitting in with local school timelines
- Managing the larger school group size
- Continued pandemic concerns
- Young mobile population
- Realising the effort required to reach our community
- Identifying a compliant Volunteer Management System
- Summer “shut downs/holidays” slowing progress.

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and the Brush Turkeys



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Learning

- There are many community members interested in engaging with this project
- Not every idea can be implemented straight away
- It is worth setting up our structure and processes properly
- Some volunteers will spend a short time with us but we still need to invest in their training and induction
- Suitable community volunteers are leaders will take time to emerge
- Volunteer Leadership doesn't always mean organising
- Rain will have an impact – positive and negative
- A pilot is a good idea,
- Original ideas evolve, so project plan will need amending = “grant variation”
- We CAN navigate a way through the rules and policies to create opportunities for volunteers to Care for Country

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Follow this project in 2023 as we progress this project for a second year.

- mysop.sydneyolympicpark.com.au
- our online community engagement hub