

Sustainable Neighbourhoods

WASTE to ART EXHIBITION

Waste to Art Project evaluation, 2019



Waste to Art is a community art project designed to challenge the way we look at waste. The exhibition presents works created by school groups, individuals and community artists exploring ideas about waste, litter and over-consumption.

The 2019 project was successful in both achieving broad participation from our community, and in presenting a high-quality exhibition with significant artistic merit. The project was originally inspired by two previous art exhibitions run by Sustainable Neighbourhood groups in West Wallsend District and Caves Beach – Swansea Area. Waste to Art intends to expand participation to include Lake Macquarie and region, and attract a wider audience. This was the second year for the citywide Waste to Art exhibition.

The exhibition highlighted a range of waste issues and demonstrated creative ideas to reconsider, reuse and upcycle the materials we use in our everyday lives. Utilising a fun and creative medium such as a community art exhibition gives our message more impact than more traditional education and engagement campaigns.



Waste to Art exhibition 2019

The Sustainable Neighbourhoods 2019 Waste to Art project engaged with more than 85 local artists and showcased more than 60 artworks.

Artist numbers and the number of artworks submitted grew substantially since the previous exhibition. The exhibition was able to expand to include the SEEN@Swansea space as well as the Launchpad space at Swansea Library.



Isabella Turner – Owl Stance

Waste to Art objectives

- Increase the Lake Mac community's awareness and understanding of local waste issues including plastic pollution, marine debris, littering and resource consumption.
- Engage, challenge and stimulate the Lake Mac community, including school students, through creative exploration.
- Encourage the community to place a positive value on waste as a resource.
- Encourage participation in community programs that will address waste issues, such as Sustainable Neighbourhoods, Eco Angels etc.
- Showcase the Lake Mac community's creative endeavours and encourage participation by local young people.
- Develop partnerships with Council, local businesses, schools and other community organisations.



Waste to Art 2019 – Opening night

Artist participation

Eighty-seven artists were involved in creating the 63 works for the 2019 exhibition, including:

Number of individual artists	40
Number of groups	10
Participating groups included: Adventurers, Busy Bees Cameron Park, Caves Beach - Swansea Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group, Circus Avalon, Clear Sky Australia, Gabby's Family Day Care, KU Windale Preschool, Newcastle High School Room 5, The Bottle Top Art Group - Biddabah Public School, U3A Mixed Media Art Group, Women's Shed on the Lake	
Number of group members	47
Total number of artists	87

The number of artworks increased by 46% from the 2018 exhibition. These figures reflect the growing popularity of the project, community enthusiasm around waste issues and the project becoming more well known.

While this growth is welcomed, it can potentially compromise the quality of the exhibition by cluttering artworks together rather than allowing space for appreciation of each piece. Possible options to manage the growth of the project include seeking a larger exhibition space, and limiting the number of works per person.



Daryl Curtis – Mosaic surfboards



Christine Douglass – Peacock Chair

Visitor numbers

In 2019, we took the opportunity to exhibit Waste to Art works in three locations, and estimate that approximately 5,800 visitors attended.

Launchpad @ Charlestown Library, 3 June to 13 August Selected works from 2018 exhibition	2,900
Living Smart Festival, 28 and 29 September Selected works from 2018 and 2019 exhibition	1,200 Saturday 200 Sunday
SEEN @ Swansea and Launchpad @ Swansea Library combined exhibition, 12 October to 1 December 2019 Waste to Art exhibition	520 SEEN 980 Launchpad
Estimated visitor numbers	5,800



Jeff Carr - Motorbike

The estimated visitor numbers for the main exhibition in October have increased since last year, as the project becomes more well known and we expanded to additional locations.

Expansion of the exhibition into the Swansea and Charlestown library's Launchpad spaces significantly increased the project's reach as the space the libraries receive a large number of visitors. Estimates at these locations are based on 10% of the library visitor numbers for that period. Displaying in this location exposes the artworks and associated waste messages to large and varied audiences.

The display at the Living Smart Festival was also highly successful, with relatively large visitor numbers over the course of the two days. The festival audience is presumably skewed to those who are already relatively engaged and receptive to waste issues.

These considerations shall inform future Waste to Art projects, including investigating alternate or additional exhibition venues with high volume of passing traffic, closer to larger population centres, and/or associated with public events.



Jackson Daley - Octopus

Exhibition impact

The exhibition delivered a powerful message about waste and overconsumption. Some examples of messages left in the guest book include:

"I was sincerely impressed and inspired. It is truly wonderful to see what can be achieved by repurposing no longer wanted items."

"Will never look at the contents of my 'yellow' bin in the same way again."

"Clever use (re-use) of materials. More fun than a visit to a shopping mall!"

"So many wonderful ideas to take home with me. Inspired to do more with what I have."



Lynden Jacobi – Fish, Lids 1 and Lids 2

Artworks

The artworks spanned a variety of materials and forms, including beautifully crafted sculptures, wearable works and jewellery, paintings, collages, mosaics, furniture, a circus set and more! The works reflected the diversity of artists spanning wonderfully colourful works from pre-school groups, to intricate finely crafted pieces.

A selection of the works is shown throughout this document. The details of the complete exhibition are available at sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au/exhibition-guide.



Diana Boyd - Forager

Project management

The project was managed primarily by the Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance Secretariat, with assistance from three Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers. Staff from Council's Arts, Culture and Tourism department assisted with logistics. Council also assisted with promotion of the project.

The exhibition terms and conditions were based on previous years, with two categories: sculptural or functional; and imagery.

The exhibition was deliberately kept as an exhibition only, rather than including any competitive aspects like judging or prizes. This reflects the nature of the project, as being primarily a way to educate and raise awareness about waste issues, and to encourage broad community participation. The non-competitive nature of the project keeps the focus on participation over prize-winning.



Melinda Hicks – Surgical Wrap Couture



The Bottle Top Art Group, Biddabah Public School – Colours of Australia

Project planning was completed in February 2019, allowing registrations to open early in the year to give participating artists opportunity to develop their ideas, collect materials, and create their works.

We are grateful for support from Council to run the project. The project was also supported through a NSW EPA Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, funded from the waste levy.

We would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation of the artists who participated enthusiastically and contributed their works for the exhibition.

Promotions

Promotion of the project was mainly digital. Invitations to participate were emailed to previous participants, artist organisations, community groups, Council staff, Council's sustainable schools newsletter and the Sustainable Neighbourhood network in early March 2019. The project was also promoted through social media channels (Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Council), as well as various Council e-newsletters such as the Eco Advocate, Creative Lake Mac and Your City.

Two media releases were also sent out by Council, but no stories were published. A small number of hard copy fliers were distributed at events throughout the year, including the Living Smart Festival.

We estimate that digital Waste to Art promotions reached more than 27,000 people in 2019.



Kay Pittelkow – PET bottle jewellery

Estimated digital reach

Facebook posts and events	13,921	Total reach
Eco Advocate	6,000	Subscribers
Sustainable Neighbourhood News	1,450	Subscribers
Waste to Art	95	Subscribers
Creative Lake Mac	730	Subscribers
Your City	5,000	Subscribers
Total reach	27,196	



Pam Garfoot - Elena



Grace Goldman – Asphyxiated Earth

Project schedule

Feb – March	Project planning – Finalisation of dates, terms and conditions, promotional content Registrations open
March - May	Invitation to participate sent to various networks Promotion and inspiration to participate – social media campaign
June - August	Selected works, Launchpad @ Charlestown Library Ongoing promotion - create an artwork Reminder email to registered artists - Request for info about artworks and progress photos
September	Registrations close mid-September. Works completed and photos submitted. Compile artwork info
October - November	Delivery of works Exhibition installation Exhibition opening night Ongoing promotion – visit the exhibition
December	Exhibition close and pack up Project evaluation



Mandy Macdonald - Birds



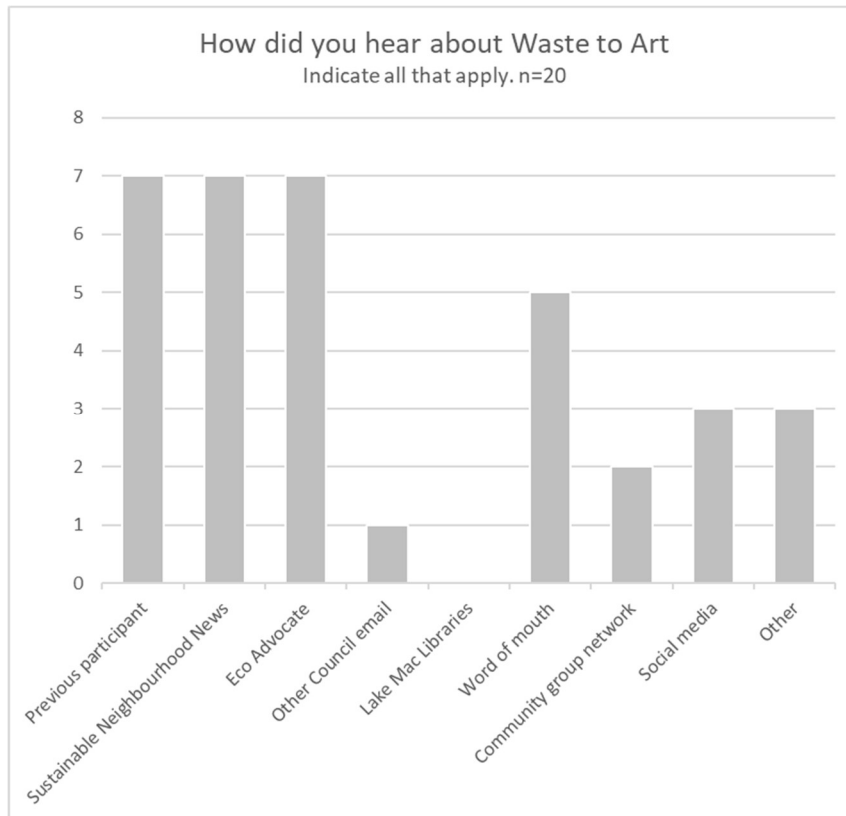
Sandra Cooke – Life Jacket

Artist feedback

A feedback survey was sent to all artist registrations following the exhibition, and received 20 responses.

Artist recruitment

Artists mainly heard about the opportunity as a previous participant, through the Eco Advocate, Sustainable Neighbourhood News, and word of mouth.



Pat Davidson - Unsustainable



Szuszy Timar – Neck piece

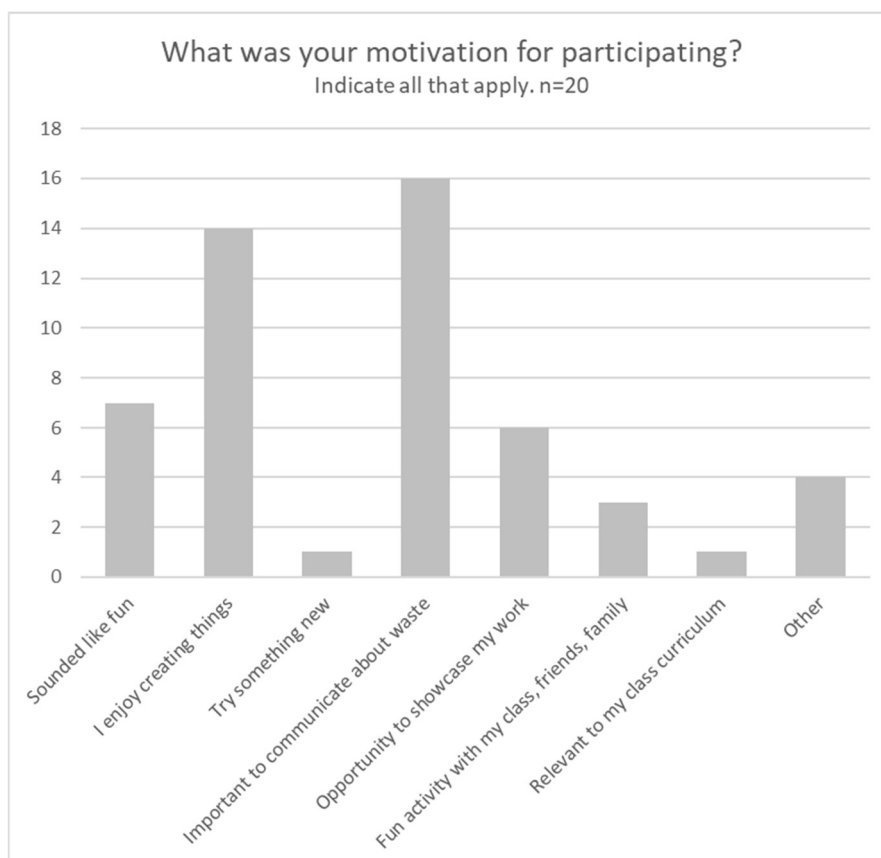


Dianne Powell –
Window Wash

Motivation to participate

Most (80%) artists were motivated to participate because they were keen to communicate about waste issues, and because they enjoy creating things (70%). Other motivations included:

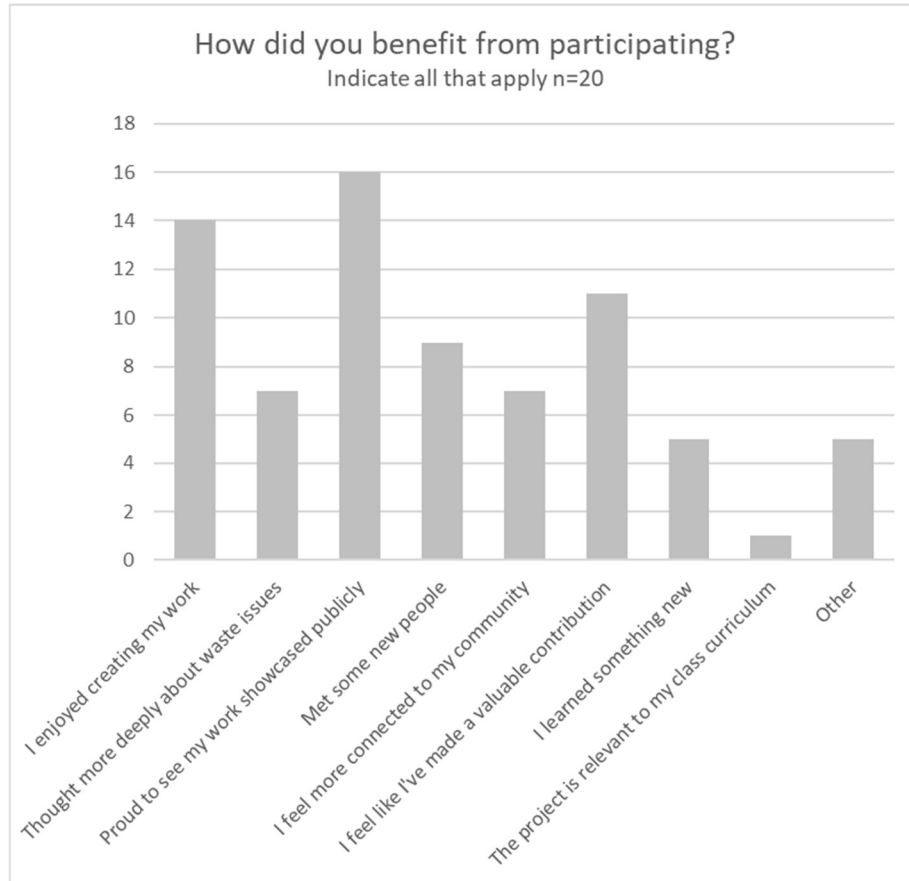
- *“Passionate about creating art that doesn't cost the earth.”*
- *“I like finding useful or decorative things to do with waste and seeing what other people think up.”*
- *“I wanted to demonstrate that “waste” could be used in such a way that the sculpture/mosaic/creation was seen by the viewer before the material.”*
- *“To inspire others, get people thinking differently regarding waste.”*



Benefits to participants

Artists were proud to see their artworks publicly showcased, and enjoyed the process of creating their works. They also felt like they had made a valuable contribution.

- *"It is satisfying making something without it costing anything (or very little)."*
- *"Hope to interest other artists in recycled paper as an art medium."*
- *"Enjoyed engaging my grandkids in their projects & discussing the problems caused by waste."*



Newcastle High School Room 5 - Eye

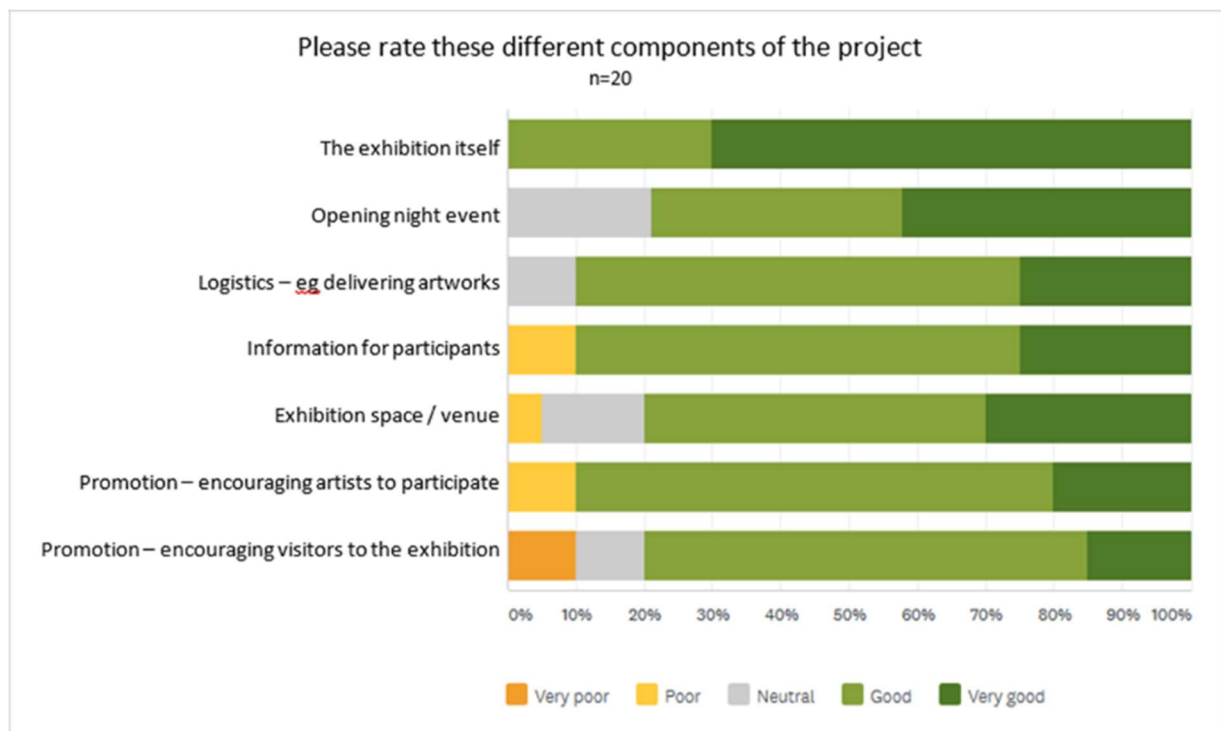
Project management

All artists rated the exhibition itself as good or very good. Most other project components were rated good or very good by more than 80% of survey respondents.

Aspects of the participant information, exhibition space, and promotion were identified as areas for improvement.



Wendy Bishop – Paper from Tree



Vicki Harrington - Bluebell

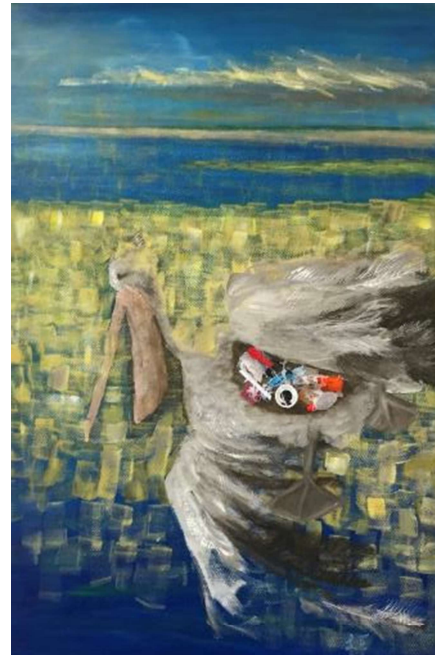
Ideas for 2020 and improving the project

The most popular ideas for future projects include holding an exhibition at other locations separate to the main exhibition, and running Clean up events and 'making' workshops.

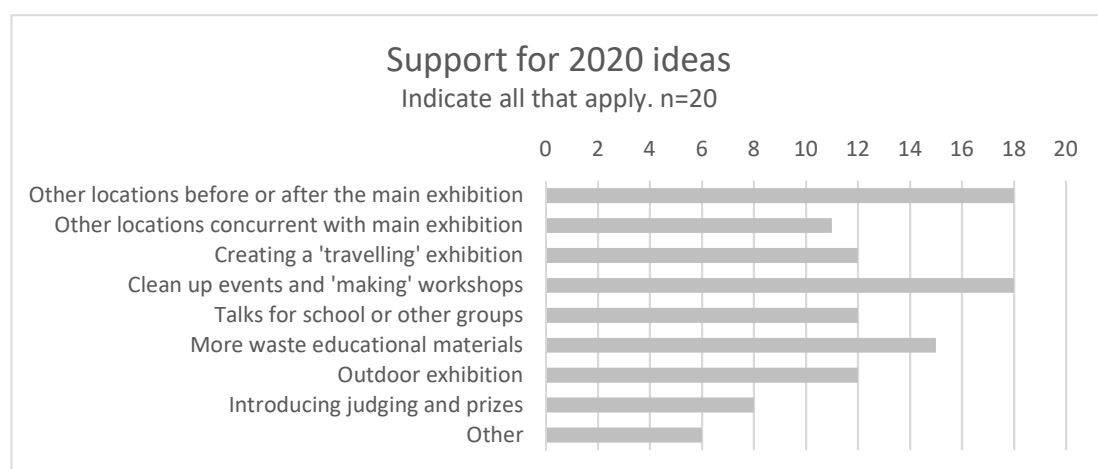
Increasing the reach of promotions, both to engage artists to participate; and to encourage visitors to the exhibition is a key priority to increase the impact of the project in future years.

Additional suggestions included:

- *"Categories. eg. building materials, medical excesses/packaging, supermarket packets, takeaway food waste, weeds/unwanted plants"*
- *"A venue in a more popular spot and a venue to cope with the expanding popularity of the event. Use the local libraries year round with information about converting waste to usable product, with examples."*
- *"I'm very impressed by the art scene outside the big cities. The ideas and the skills are high standard, and it's something regional centres can be proud of. Promote it with pride!"*
- *"Partner with a MakerSpace, a permanent venue for art resources and upcycling activities, like The Bower and Reverse Garbage in Marrickville or Transition Newcastle."*
- *"The exhibition should only be split if there enough good quality exhibits."*
- *"More promotion - perhaps to nearby councils, repair cafes, permaculture groups and other eco minded organisations."*
- *"Email all schools just about Waste to Art separately to all other Sustainable info."*
- *"Lake cleanup, recycled art sculptures around lake, education classes on waste, have sustainable fair twice a year bigger space, awards"*
- *"I want to say a 'travelling' exhibition, but how much work is that!"*
- *"A more central Exhibition space where large crowds gather."*

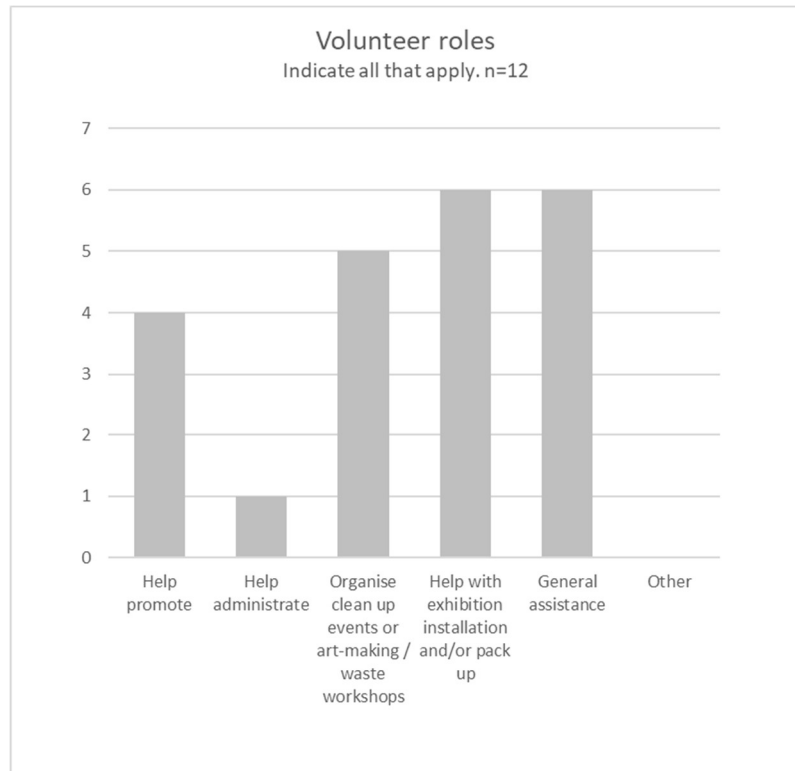


Lyn Fraser - Wasted



Volunteer roles

About one third of respondents indicated that they would be interested in assisting with the running of Waste to Art.



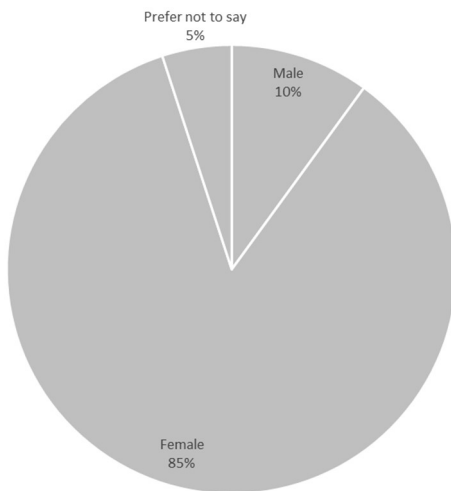
Ray Woodley – Mr and Mrs Scraps



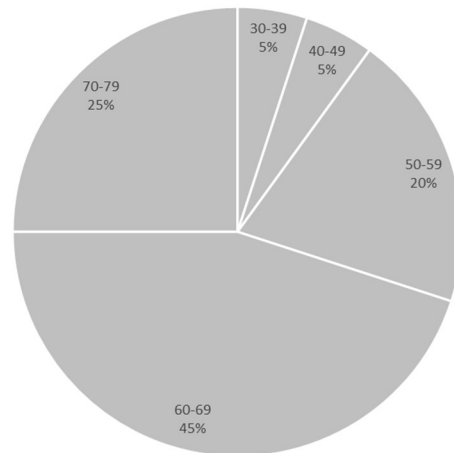
Denise Ellis - Flowers

Artist demographics

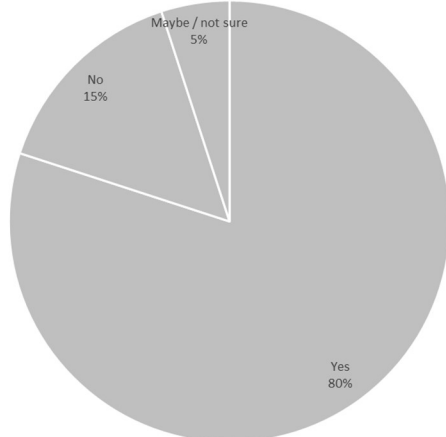
Are you male or female?
n=20



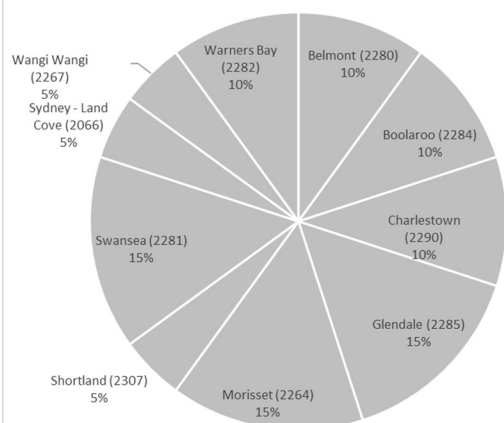
What is your age?
n=20



Have you heard of Sustainable Neighbourhoods before?
n=20



What is your postcode?
n=20



Tamara Doggen – Fifty shades of beige