Community Placemaking Toolkit

Ideas to help you improve and energise your local area

northern
beaches
council

Bringing life and energy to your community
We all love the lifestyle we live on the Northern Beaches -
there is just nowhere like it in the world.

The scattering of villages, centres and special places up and down the coast are ripe for community gatherings, events or activities - and this guide is designed to help locals who can see the opportunity to do a little more in their area.

So - what is placemaking?
Many of us might see where we can improve an area - in planning terms, we call this 'placemaking.' Placemaking is a process where the community can shape their own neighbourhoods. It is a collaborative process that has everyone's wellbeing in mind.

Placemaking means that locals solve local issues, and locals lead the changes that they know are right for their area. It is people-driven and people-focused. It should inspire the community to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces.

How Council can help
Successful placemaking relies on the inclusion and active participation of a wide range of people from across the community - through every aspect of the process, from design, planning and the final delivery. All this can occur with Council playing an enabling role.

Community-led projects cannot exist without a supportive enabling environment.

Our role, as Council, is to support these activities while also making sure that initiatives meet public safety standards, are sustainable and are more likely to bring benefits to more people.

We are committed to vibrant centres that contribute to building a safe and inclusive community. We have developed this guide so that more people can deliver placemaking initiatives that reflect the character and needs of this diverse community and locations.

Our dedicated Place & Economic Development team can guide and assist you with your planning to improve or energise your local area. It can all begin by filling out one simple form.

Before you begin

Before you begin, reflect on your readiness to lead a project in your community. It can be a huge undertaking - so begin by filling out our online form and we can advise if your idea is feasible.

We recommend an approach developed by Project for Public Spaces called 'lighter, quicker, cheaper'. This encourages people to start small - do not reach for maximum impact on your first try. Instead, look at simple, short-term, and low-cost approaches that allow you to test your idea, garner support, and gather information and feedback to advocate for longer term projects.

By starting smaller, you will have a more realistic idea of what is achievable, the resources required and the appetite within the community for your idea.

Other elements of your planning can be started as soon as possible:

- **Interest:** Speak to others, share, and test your ideas and gain an insight into what other people might think or perceive about your idea. Think about how you will engage with people to easily gain and analyse feedback and ensure support.

- **Research:** There are many resources available to understand what is involved with placemaking projects – we have provided a list of links at the end of this guide. Look at examples of other successful placemaking projects either in your area or elsewhere.

- **Council:** When you contact the Place & Economic Development team, we will discuss the feasibility of your project. This will include a discussion around whether you have sufficient time for planning and execution. The Place Coordinator for your ward area will assist you with Council requirements and processes. Start by filling in the online form, and also check our events guide.

- **Resources:** You will need an engaged and enthusiastic team to assist you. Consider what other resources you will need for your project, what you can commit to and what resources are already available.

- **Timing:** School holidays or different seasons will influence your plans – for example, avoid outdoor activities in the middle of winter, planting a community garden in the middle of summer or holding a school-based placemaking initiative during school holidays. Always make sure you have a wet-weather plan.
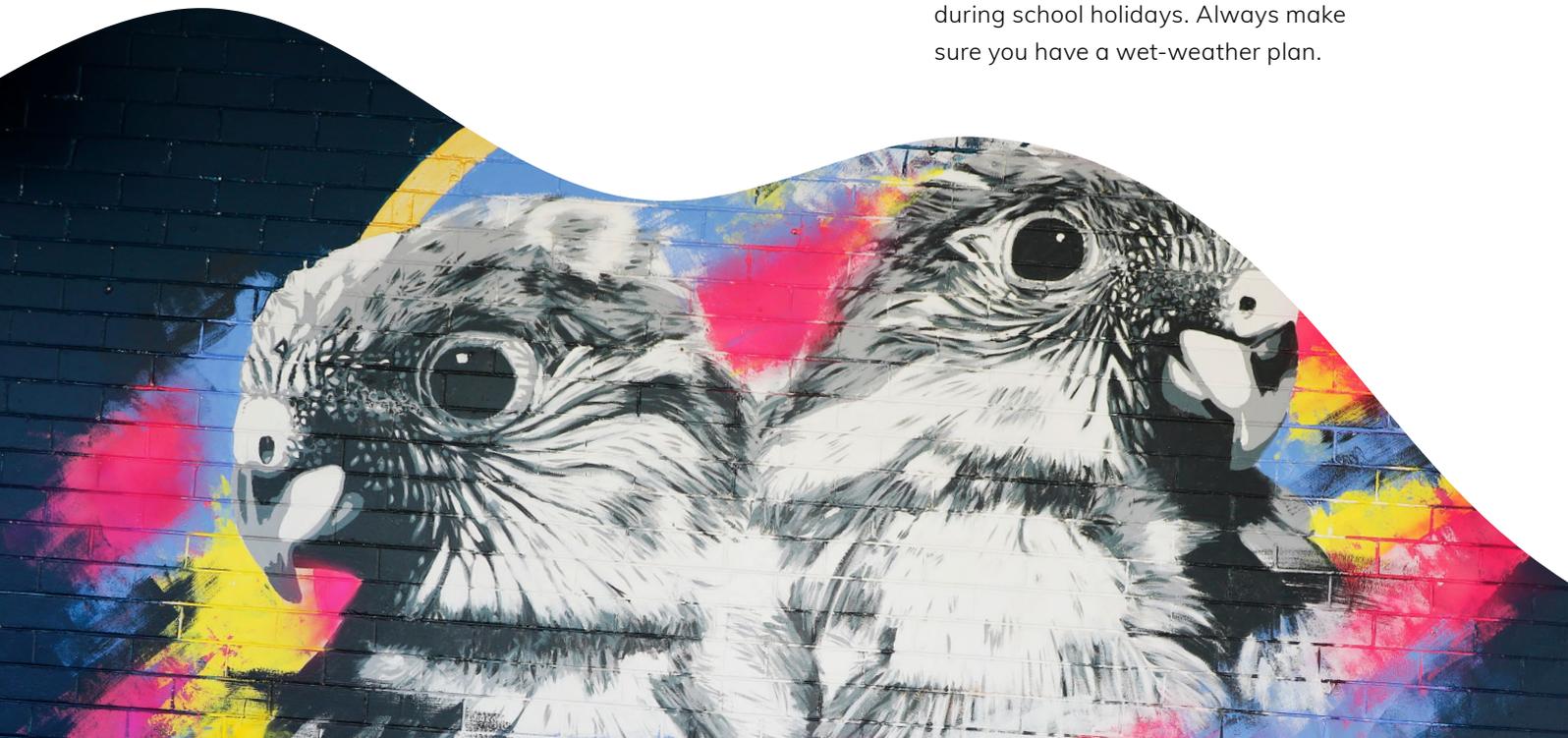
If you feel you have the resources and support to take it to the next level, start to think about the nitty gritty.

Step 1: Develop a project plan
A project plan will be essential in helping you to understand, communicate and, where required, delegate the various steps in the project.

Use the project plan to set out a vision for the project. Be clear on what you want to achieve and why the project is needed. Identify what success will look like and how it will benefit the community

The project plan will also help you to plan out administrative tasks - insurances, permits, timelines etc. Speak to Council, who can point you in the right direction.

Include how you will engage with stakeholders and a timeline for project delivery for each step. Include any risks and solutions, resources and budget required.

Check if there are any grants available that could assist with budget. Council grants are listed on our website. There might also be grants or funding available from other bodies or organisations. You may also be able to source sponsorship for funding or in-kind services.

Also use the project plan process to understand any potential risks - it is your responsibility to identify and address any potential hazards.

This is best done through a risk assessment. Find out more about event risks and resources including a risk assessment template on the SafeWork NSW website. The complexity of your project will determine the level of risk to be addressed.

Step 2: Engage with the whole community
From your early engagement to garner whether there is support for your project, you will have an idea of how people might perceive your ideas. Broad support will be vital to success and the potential to move ahead with bigger proposals.

Developing an engagement plan will clarify who you need to be in touch with, how often and through what mechanism.

Beyond your early contact with Council, you might also have to engage with NSW Government agencies such as Transport for NSW. In terms of local stakeholders, think about relevant residents, businesses, schools, local police, or community groups.

Throughout your planning, gather feedback and encourage involvement, whether this is through social media, online or in-person surveys, meetings, or workshops.

Step 3: Plan for the day
Create a plan to help you manage operations on the day and record any incidents. This includes delegating tasks for everyone in the lead up to, during and after the event.

Step 4: Evaluate success
Remember - if you are starting small, then you will want to learn more from early events to build on your project. Develop a clear and simple evaluation plan to measure the success of your event. Consider if this should include methods to capture community sentiment on the day or the benefits of your project to local businesses. This could be undertaken in the form of surveys.

Examples of community-led placemaking

Pop up parks

Events

Community gardens

Greening projects

Beautification of areas

Artwork

Checklist

Task	Planning/lead time (months)	Complete
Before you begin: • Understand the level of local interest • Research the level of effort required • Speak to Council • Gather your team • Consider resources and timing	12	Yes/No
Step 1: Develop a project plan	**12**	**Yes/No**
Agree on the project's vision	12	Yes/No
Determine if you are part of an incorporated body or if you need to form one	12	Yes/No
Understand insurance requirements	12	Yes/No
Determine if you need Council approval	12	Yes/No
Research any applicable grants/sponsorship opportunities	12	Yes/No
Develop a wet weather plan or contingencies for other hazards such as extreme heat	3	Yes/No
Complete a risk assessment	3	Yes/No
Step 2: Engage with the whole community	**12**	**Yes/No**
Establish an engagement plan to connect with your community and seek their support	12	Yes/No
Identify a list of stakeholders	12	Yes/No
Develop a social media presence and determine how you will keep people in the loop	6	Yes/No
Step 3: Plan for the day	**3**	**Yes/No**
Delegate who does what/develop run sheet listing all contacts	1	Yes/No
Develop a process to report any incidents	1	Yes/No
Manage operations	Day of event	Yes/No
Step 4: Evaluate success		**Yes/No**
Develop an evaluation process to measure success, debrief and learn lessons for next time	Post event	Yes/No

Find out more

If you want to get started, begin by dropping the Place & Economic Development team an email at places@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au or by filling in the online form or call us on 1300 434 434.

Resources

Community led projects application form

Northern Beaches Event Guide

Northern Beaches Grants

SafeWork NSW

Town Teams

NSW Public Spaces Charter

NSW Guides to Public Spaces Activation

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

Local Community Insurance

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