

# Second Nature 'I'm in' community engagement campaign

**COUNCIL NAME**

Waverley Council

**WEB ADDRESS**

[waverley.nsw.gov.au](http://waverley.nsw.gov.au)

**POPULATION**

70,706

## Overview

Second Nature is an integrated environmental awareness and engagement campaign. With an initial 'I'm in' Pledge campaign, Council invited locals to join the collective effort to look after the environment. By taking simple actions in their everyday life, people can make sustainability second nature.

## Background

Council's previous approach to sustainability engagement and education has been ad-hoc and information-based. Community participation was low. Following a desktop review of previous projects, Council identified a need for a more strategic approach.

Regular monitoring and analysis showed that Council is not meeting its community sustainability targets such as resource recovery rates, carbon emission reductions, water use, transport and biodiversity. While some infrastructure and operational changes will assist Council in meeting these goals, it's critical to engage and educate the community to drive behaviour change.



## Implementation

In May-June 2015, social research was conducted to better understand awareness levels around sustainability and Council's programs; community values and motivations for living in the local area; plus what community environmental action was being undertaken. Close to 500 responses were received from a varied demographic spread. The research indicated:

- A high majority valued lifestyle and the natural environment of the local area.
- People felt connected to place.
- The top motivations to act sustainably included a love of nature, desire to keep things clean, staying healthy, and making a difference.
- People believed that looking after the environment is a shared responsibility.
- Sustainability means different things to individuals e.g. recycling, impact, clean,
- There is low awareness of Council's programs and environmental targets.
- There is a strong appetite to act but individuals are unsure how to proceed.

Based on this feedback, Council created a consistent brand for engagement. Second Nature was created to inspire buy-in, promote behavioural change, build awareness about Council's sustainability work, and develop a database of contacts for ongoing engagement.

The Second Nature campaign takes a "values" approach to engagement, focusing on the underlying values which shape behavioural choices. This evidenced-based approach has been used to focus local attention on sustainability issues in individuals' everyday life.

Council focussed on broadening its reach initially, targeting those age cohorts which represent over 70% of the population (younger workforce to retirees). To start building a centralised database, Council launched Second Nature with a pledge and collected contact details.

Council employed a wide variety of communications/engagement methods in response to feedback from survey respondents and best-practice methods: stories in popular local print newspapers (Wentworth Courier and the Beast), radio interview, online advertising, regular social media posts, online, video, letterbox drop, posters in popular venues, ambassadors, leveraging community partnerships, and face-to-face outreach. Events included successful pop-up stalls at Oxford St Mall and Bondi Farmers Markets, Library and in other precincts.

Council had a media partnership with Wentworth Courier to run regular stories over the campaign. Twelve locally based community groups such as Transition Bondi, Blue Bondi Green, Take 3 and BikEast also partnered with Council.

The monitoring and evaluation plan includes well-defined objectives, success indicators and data collection measures. Methods include media metrics and analytical tools, attendance rates, NationBuilder statistics, anecdotal evidence and survey feedback. Periodic monitoring and evaluation sessions with stakeholders has helped refine strategies. Council also tracked the effectiveness of communications methods to help refocus resources at face-to-face events.

The project team concurrently rolled out a Second Nature council employee program. Council recognised a need to engage staff and lead by example. The program takes a three-pronged approach to ensure sustained staff engagement including:

- (1) a comprehensive communications element;
- (2) targeted, evidence-based behaviour change programs; and
- (3) embedding sustainability at an organisational level by working with senior leadership teams.

The project budget was \$35,000 for the 3-month campaign roll-out.

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**REFERENCE**

[secondnature.org.au](http://secondnature.org.au)

## Outcomes

Around 1040 locals have joined the campaign, building an active community with which Council communicates and engages with on a variety of behaviour change areas. Awareness of Council's sustainability work, sustainability actions for individuals, plus ways to get involved have all been promoted. Council also reached a broader community audience locally (ranging from school age to retirees). The successful launch activation event, 'I'm in' Pledge Day, at Bondi Beach attracted over 350 people and received overwhelming positive feedback.

There are 12 local community groups, 6 local schools and childcare centres who are campaign partners to support the delivery of Second Nature.

High profile people and key stakeholders have shown support, including (the then) NSW Environment Minister, Mark Speakman; well-known architect, Tone Wheeler; local fitness group, BUF Girls; and the popular Three Blue Ducks restaurant.

## Key Learnings

Second Nature is a framework for all of Council's sustainability work encompassing corporate targets and programs to deliver them. The pledge campaign was the initial launch but the intention is to extend beyond the initial three months to develop a long-term behaviour change program.

A collaborative design approach with community groups, more program ambassadors and targeted education resources may have improved outcomes. Council will consider these lessons for the next phase of the program. The project team is currently working with stakeholders and undertaking research to determine the next intense phase of the campaign.

## Contact

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**This project was highly commended in the Communication, Education and Empowerment category at the 2016 LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards**