

Better Together

Social Sustainability Strategy 2041



Workshop in a Box



northern
beaches
council

Welcome

Thank you for partnering with Northern Beaches Council by hosting a Workshop in a Box, as part of developing *Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2041*.

As we develop *Better Together*, Council wants to understand the lived experience of everyone on the Northern Beaches and how you experience safety, inclusion and feelings of connectedness.

To ensure *Better Together* truly reflects the aspirations and needs of everyone, Council is seeking your support to capture and elevate the voices of all those who live in our community, particularly those who can be hard to reach, into the consultation process.

These workshops are part of a broader discussion with the community as we work to develop a strategy that will provide long term social direction over the next 20 years and guide efforts to make the Northern Beaches an even more inclusive, connected and safer place.

Collaborating with the community and partner organisations is essential to develop a plan that identifies the strengths, challenges and opportunities for everyone on the Northern Beaches.

Workshop in a Box is just one of the ways in which you can be involved in *Better Together*. Please visit yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/better-together to find out more, complete a survey or participate in the Creative Challenge.

The draft strategy will be publicly available for feedback and refinement in mid-2021.



If you have any questions about the Workshop in a Box process or the *Better Together* strategy, please contact:



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For the host

About this guide

This guide has been designed to make it easy for you to run a *Better Together* Workshop in a Box. This discussion is designed as a workshop for a small group of people to get together and talk. The setting can be a meeting room or informal: a kitchen table, lounge room, classroom or coffee shop.

Participants don't need to be an expert on social sustainability and inclusion. What people need is a willingness to listen and to share ideas that are aimed at developing solutions to make the Northern Beaches an even better place for those who live, work and visit here.

Anyone can host a *Better Together* workshop. All you need to do is bring together a group of people who are willing to share and discuss ideas.

Tips for hosting a *Better Together* workshop:

- Choose a time and format – online or in person and develop your invitation list.
- In person: ideally use a space that can fit 4–6 people and where you can comfortably hold a discussion with minimum interruptions. Make sure you have sanitiser available, participants are able to maintain 1.5m physical distancing, ask people to bring their own devices to fill out the survey, and encourage them to wear masks if they would like. If you want to print out copies of the survey, download it here: workshopinabox.questionpro.com.au
- Online: make sure you have people's emails, set up an online meeting using Zoom or any other web conferencing system and send out links beforehand. Encourage people to find a quiet space to participate in the online workshop and limit streaming of other services (e.g. Netflix, Spotify) to improve internet connections.
- Have another person available to take notes in the reporting template to capture participants' answers for the discussion questions
- When you invite people, direct them to the *Better Together* webpage so they can read the background information prior to the workshop: yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/better-together
- Expect the discussion to take around 30 – 45 minutes.

For the host

Preparing for the workshop

As the host, you have a very important role. Please read and understand this guide so that you can answer questions and help the other participants as you go. Your primary role is to foster and participate in a constructive discussion without dominating it or allowing it to get out of control.

Materials

The workshop doesn't require many materials:

1. This guide
2. A device (we suggest tablet or laptop) for you as the host to complete the host survey reporting template
3. Devices (tablets or smart phones) for participants to complete the participant survey
4. Blank paper for people who want to take notes
5. Hard copies of the survey if required.

You might like to provide drinks or snacks if your meeting is in person, but this is not necessary.

Effective participation guidelines

In the next section ('Allowing everyone to contribute'), you'll find the workshop guidelines and outline. Read the guidelines aloud and confirm that everyone understands them. Then go around the table and get people to indicate that they agree to abide by them for the course of the discussion (the next 30 to 45 minutes). This formality is necessary to protect and nurture the conversation that will follow.

Using a talking object

A talking object is a simple facilitation tool that can be used to indicate who the current speaker is and remind others that they need to wait to contribute. It can be any object such as a salt shaker, wooden spoon or ball.

Using a talking object is just one way to limit multiple people speaking at once. Other options include you as the facilitator calling on people before they speak, or people knocking on the table to indicate they have finished speaking. What's important is that people can speak without interruption when it is their turn, so that everyone gets to have their say and be really listened to.

If your workshop is online, instead of a talking object you can call on people individually to take their turn speaking or use the hands up feature in the web conferencing system. On Zoom you can show participants how to use the hands up feature to indicate a desire to speak.

If you like, you can get everyone to decide how to make sure people can speak without interruption. You can always bring in a talking object later if it becomes necessary.

Questions

As the host, it's also important to guide people through the agenda. You'll lead the group on to each discussion topic and question, determine speaking order, and make sure everyone follows the effective participation guidelines, particularly avoiding people interrupting or speaking for too long.

Recording and submitting your feedback

Encourage participants to type their answers in the participant survey as they go.

Preferably a member of your team/group will take notes into the reporting template, to capture answers and reflections for the discussion questions (the stories / 'tell us about a time' questions). Please provide this reporting back to Council after the workshop.

Please email notes from the workshop to BetterTogether@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

Allowing everyone to contribute

The Workshop in a Box works best when people feel free to respectfully say what's on their minds without being judged. They need to know that there are no right or wrong things to say and that everyone's ideas are valuable. These guidelines are designed to create a framework for positive communication and understanding between a group of people while still talking about the big issues.

This means a very different and perhaps unfamiliar set of guidelines for when and how to speak on challenging or 'political' issues.

Effective participation guidelines

- 1. Open mindedness:** listen to and respect all points of view. Conversation isn't just talking. It's talking and listening. In a small group you'll be listening more than you'll be talking. By focusing on listening, you also benefit from the variety of ideas around the table.
- 2. Acceptance:** others will have a different point of view from you and by encouraging an atmosphere of acceptance people will be more likely to share their views.
- 3. Curiosity:** seek to understand rather than persuade.
- 4. Discovery:** question assumptions, look for new insights. These workshops are designed to expose us to new ideas or possibly even see old ideas in a new way.
- 6. Sincerity:** speak from your heart and personal experience. We want to hear what's important to you, not just your opinions or data you've collected. Relate your ideas or reports to your personal experience.
- 7. Brevity:** go for honesty and depth but make sure everyone has a chance to speak. We recommend 2-3 minutes per response if possible.
- 8. Take turns:** everyone will have a chance to contribute, people will only speak when it is their turn and will listen to the person who is speaking.



Workshop guide

Step by step

Step 1 - Begin by reading out the effective participation guidelines on page 4 and ensure everyone agrees and understands. Get agreement on how the group will operate.

Step 2 - Introductions. The host hands the talking object (if using one) to the participant on their left. The participant introduces themselves and explains briefly "what I enjoy about living / working / visiting the Northern Beaches". Ensure everyone has a turn at speaking and limit this to two minutes each. The talking object comes back to the host, who also answers the question.

Step 3 - Answering the questions.

For each theme (included, connected and safe) follow this process:

- a) The host reads question 1 aloud and passes the talking object around the group allowing each participant to answer.
- b) Once everyone has spoken, participants answer question 1 in the participant survey using their personal devices.
- c) The host reads question 2 aloud and participants answer the question in their survey – no need to respond to the group.
- d) The host reads question 3 on the host survey aloud and records people's responses in the host survey
- e) Repeat process for the remaining themes.

Step 4 - Wrap up. The talking object is placed in the middle of the table so anyone can speak. The group members make final contributions or comments on each other's stories. The host records responses in the host response template and thanks people for their participation.

Access the electronic survey:

workshopinabox.questionpro.com.au

Discussion guide questions

Question 1: Imagine a community that **feels inclusive** for people that live, work or visit there. What three words or phrases would you use to describe this place? (everyone shares answers and at the end of sharing records their answers in their survey)

Question 2: How inclusive do you think the Northern Beaches is (choose one answer)? (participants answer survey privately)

- I feel the Northern Beaches is a very inclusive place
- I feel the Northern Beaches is a relatively inclusive place
- The Northern Beaches isn't really an inclusive place
- The Northern Beaches is not at all an inclusive place

Question 3: Can you tell the group about a time when you felt included or didn't **feel included** in the Northern Beaches? (participants share and host records stories in response template)

Question 4: Imagine a community that **feels like a connected place** to live, work or visit. What three words or phrases would you use to describe this place? (everyone shares answers and at the end of sharing records their answers in their survey)

Question 5: Would you say the Northern Beaches is a connected place (choose one answer)? (participants answer survey privately)

- Yes, the Northern Beaches is a connected place
- The Northern Beaches is a relatively connected place but it could be better
- I don't feel that connected to the Northern Beaches community
- I don't think the Northern Beaches is a connected place at all

Question 6: Can you tell the group about a time you felt connected or didn't **feel connected** in the Northern Beaches? (participants share and host records stories in response template)

Question 7: Imagine a community that **feels safe** to live, work or visit. What three words or phrases would you use to describe this place? (everyone shares answers and at the end of sharing records their answers in their survey)

Question 8: How safe do you feel the Northern Beaches is (choose one answer)? (participants answer survey privately)

1. I feel the Northern Beaches is a very safe place
2. I feel the Northern Beaches is a relatively safe place
3. I feel a bit concerned about my safety on the Northern Beaches
4. I don't think the Northern Beaches is safe

Question 9: Can you tell the group about a time you felt safe or didn't **feel safe** in the Northern Beaches? (participants share and host records stories in response template)

Question 10: Wrap up – do you have any comments on other people's stories or anything to add about being safe, included and connected in the Northern Beaches? (talking object placed in centre, stories recorded in the the host response template).

Thank participants for their time.



Thank you

Thank you for contributing as we develop the *Better Together* Social Sustainability Strategy.

Your feedback, experiences and ideas are an important part of our vision to make the Northern Beaches a safer, more inclusive and more connected place.

For more information on how to participate in Better Together, share your stories or join our Creativity Challenge, please visit yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/better-together.

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