



2015

**Towards a Better Community Natural Resource Centre
Summary of the Results of a Survey of Members
And
Responses by the Centre's Management Committee**

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Introduction

The Normanville Natural Resource Centre (NNRC) is a community owned and operated group that engages with the local community and responds to its needs and issues relating to the management of natural resources. Its primary function is to provide information, hold workshops and field days and provide other services on NRM issues. It operates independently of any government or council and is managed by a committee of local volunteers elected by its members. The NNRC is nevertheless part of an alliance with the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board (the Board) and six other centres located at Gawler, Mount Pleasant, Adelaide Hills, Victor Harbor, the Barossa Bush Garden and Willunga. A substantial portion of funding for all centres is provided by the Board. All centres are committed to improving the capacity of people and regional organizations to sustainably manage our natural resources.

The NNRC is continually looking for ways to improve the services it provides to the local community. To this end, and as a first step, the NNRC management committee, in July 2014, undertook a survey via email of all members connected to the internet. The survey was conducted using "Monkey Survey" and emailed out to 388 members. In total the NNRC had 536 members at the time of the survey. Some 110 responses were received, representing a response rate of 28 per cent.

The aim of the survey was to get a better understanding of what members thought of the NNRC, how it is performing as a community organization, what can be done to improve the services provided and how it can be more effective in improving the capacity of people and regional organizations to sustainably manage our local natural resources.

This report summarizes the results of that survey and the responses of the management Committee after its careful consideration of the survey results. A copy of the full report of the survey results is available on request to the administrator of the Centre. Requests can be made via email to admin@nnrc.com.au. The full report will be sent by return email. Hard copies are also available at the Centre in Normanville.

Familiarity with and involvement in the Normanville Natural Resource Centre

The first few questions of the survey focused on member's familiarity with the NNRC, their level of involvement in its activities, what they thought of the services provided and their ideas for future improvement.

Nearly half of all respondents indicated that they had a good to very good knowledge of what the NNRC is all about while a further 37 percent indicated an 'average' familiarity with the work of the Centre. While this result is encouraging in one way, it also indicates that there is scope for improving communication with members, and also the wider public on the aims, functions and activities of the NNRC. Other key points to emerge from the survey results include the following:

- there is a small core of members who are very active in the activities of the NNRC but nearly two thirds of members have a relatively low level of participation;
- some 40 percent of respondents want to become more involved while the rest will keep the same level of participation in the future;
- over half the respondents visited the Centre twice or less in the previous twelve months but 20 per cent have been regular visitors;
- people generally found what they were looking for or were appropriately directed when they did visit the Centre;
- people found the staff at the Centre very helpful;
- the information in the Yankalilla Newsletter was also found to be very useful but people were somewhat less inclined to use the NNRC website as a source of information on natural resource management (NRM) issues;
- all respondents indicated that they would definitely or maybe use the NNRC as a future primary source of information on NRM issues; and
- overall, there was a very strong endorsement of the work of the NNRC in providing information resources on NRM issues.

Committee's Response

The Committee, while being somewhat encouraged by the results, felt that there was room for improvement. It is to be expected that most members of the NNRC would be reasonably familiar with its activities and functions, but the general public may be much less familiar. The Committee will try to promote the Centre more through a range of avenues, including enhanced efforts with the media, word of mouth, improvements to the Website and Facebook, and more and improved signage attached to field work. When the Normanville office is closed, there is now a sign on the door to direct people to additional out of hours contact points. The Yankalilla Regional News monthly publication always has a substantial contribution from the Centre on its activities and other NRM issues. The Committee is also of the view that one of the best ways to promote awareness and encourage participation is to hold interesting, relevant and topical functions (see below).

NNRC activities and functions

The NNRC holds many functions throughout the year, particularly seminars and workshops on a wide range of NRM related issues. Some 52 of these were held last financial year. In the survey, members were asked questions on their involvement in these functions, what they thought of them and their ideas for future topics. The key points that emerged are as follows:

- a relatively small number of respondents attended NNRC functions on a regular basis, but over three quarters attended, at most, two functions in the previous 12 months;
- respondents were, in general, very appreciative of the functions they attended which overwhelmingly met with their expectations – over 70 per cent of respondents indicated that the sessions they attended met their expectations; and

- many suggestions were made for future events.

Sessions that respondents found most useful included;

- Fauna
- Bees – 13 respondents
- Australia Day events
- Fruit tree planting
- Field trip on the geology of the Fleurieu Peninsula – 8 respondents
- Salisbury wetland trip
- Bird watching -2 respondents
- Waste recycling
- Understanding your power bills
- Hooded plovers
- Clean green workshop.

Respondents made many suggestions for future workshops, seminars or field days. These are listed below;

- Coastal and beach gardening, including what plants to plant in these harsh environments
- Establishing and maintaining native gardens
- Edible wild plants on the Fleurieu Peninsula
- Riparian and marine resource management
- Native animals bees and gardens
- Field trip to farms that have done work with NNRC
- Clean up Bungala River in conjunction with property owners – through consultation and working bees
- Environmental solutions and ways of improving the environment
- More focus on weed suppression
- Sessions to educate children
- More on identification of native plants and which ones grow well in this region
- Growing and pruning fruit trees
- Recycling and waste management
- More on walks like the geology one but not so ambitious
- Native birds
- Growing vegetables
- Edible seaweeds on our coast
- Local environmental concerns
- Natural history walks
- Interactive snake awareness, handling and first aid
- Overall land management of regional natural resources
- Sustainable living.

Veggie Swap

An initiative of the NNRC, started a few years ago, is the "Veggie Swap". On the first Saturday of each month between 9.30am and 10.30 am, members of Veggie Swap come along to bring surplus garden vegetables or fruit, or plant cuttings from their gardens and swap for other produce on the table. It costs \$5 a year to join. At present there are about 60 members. The initiative does not take a lot of resources but is a good way not to waste surplus garden produce and, more importantly, to enhance communication, involvement and community spirit.

The Veggie Swap has been reasonable well attended and nearly 100 per cent of respondents thought it was a worthwhile activity for the NNRC. Some comments on how it could be improved are listed below;

- could add some special events or speakers,
- could also have speakers on related topics, recipe of the month using seasonal produce,
- restrict to all locally grown produce,
- More vegies and edible plants, less cuttings
- Excellent in current format
- Add visits to gardens in the area after
- Publicity on attendances and what is available for swapping.

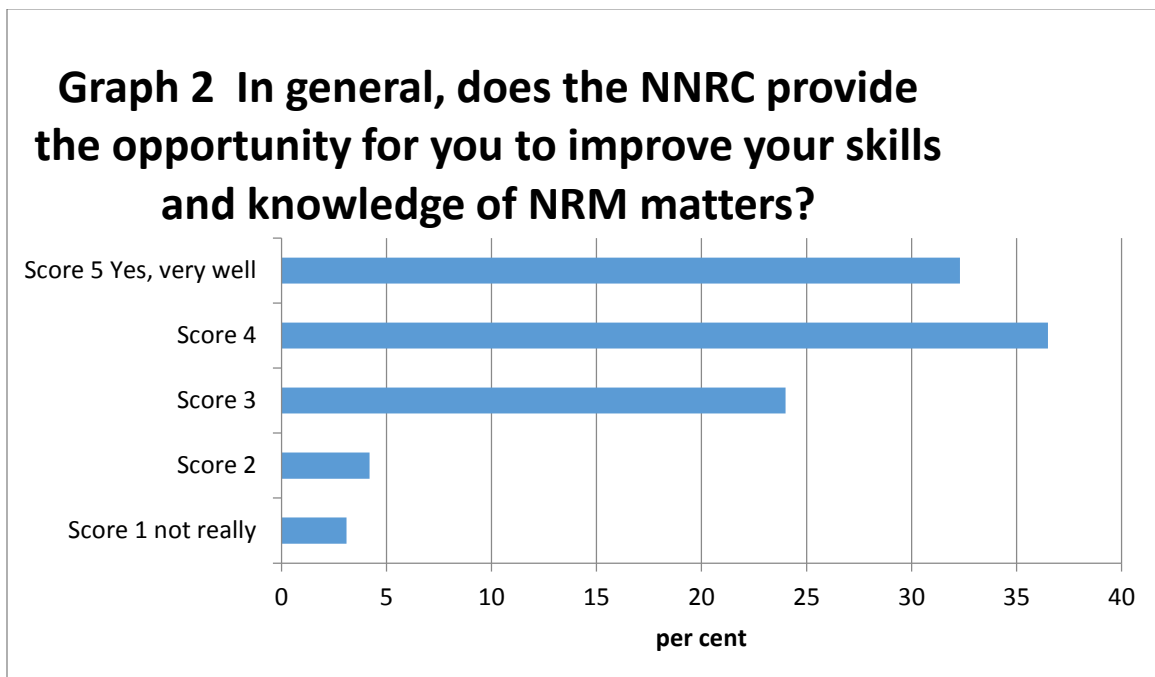
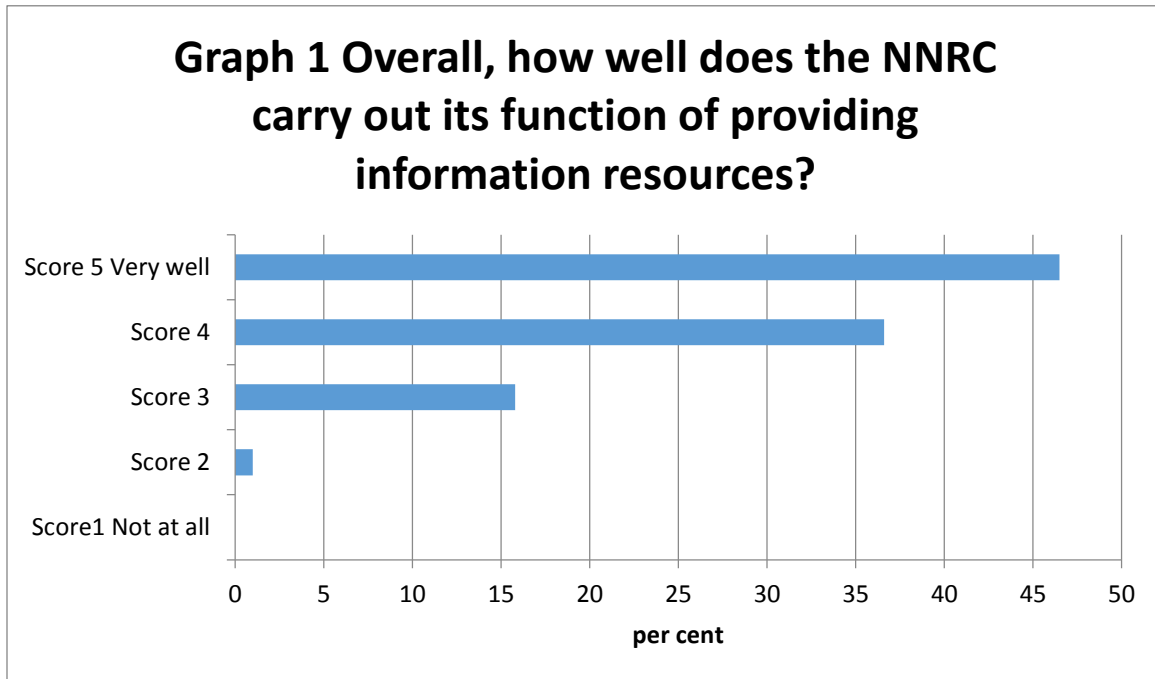
Committee's Response

The Committee has taken careful note of the responses to this section of the survey and the many suggestions made for potential future events. These will be taken into account in planning future programs. Some of the suggestions have already been taken up. For example, last year a tour of the Yankalilla Waste Transfer Station was held but it was poorly attended. Other sessions have been held on making things out of recycled materials, weed identification and management, growing and pruning fruit trees, geological walks (which were very well attended), snake handling and first aid and identification of native birds. On the suggestion of overall land management of regional natural resources, the NRM Board holds periodic courses on this, one recently being held in Yankalilla. It may be well worth while holding some of these again in the near future.

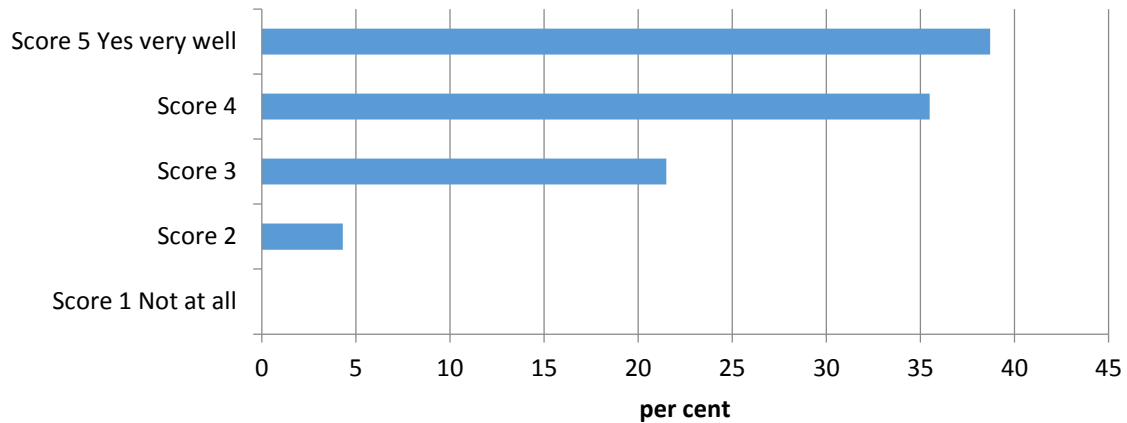
Some activities of the NNRC, such as tree propagation and planting and Clean up Australia Day efforts rely entirely on volunteers. The Committee is heartened by the considerable efforts of volunteers on many activities and is continually considering way to attract more volunteers and make their efforts more rewarding. One initiative being considered is to form a youth subcommittee with the idea of encouraging more younger people to undertake volunteer work. More generally, the survey results indicate a considerable interest by members to undertake volunteer work, or become more involved in the work of the NNRC. The Committee will need to explore different ways to tap into this potential. A key will be to have worthwhile projects that will attract volunteers and give them a sense of achievement. The Committee felt that the Veggie Swap is working well and its present format will continue.

Overall performance of the NNRC

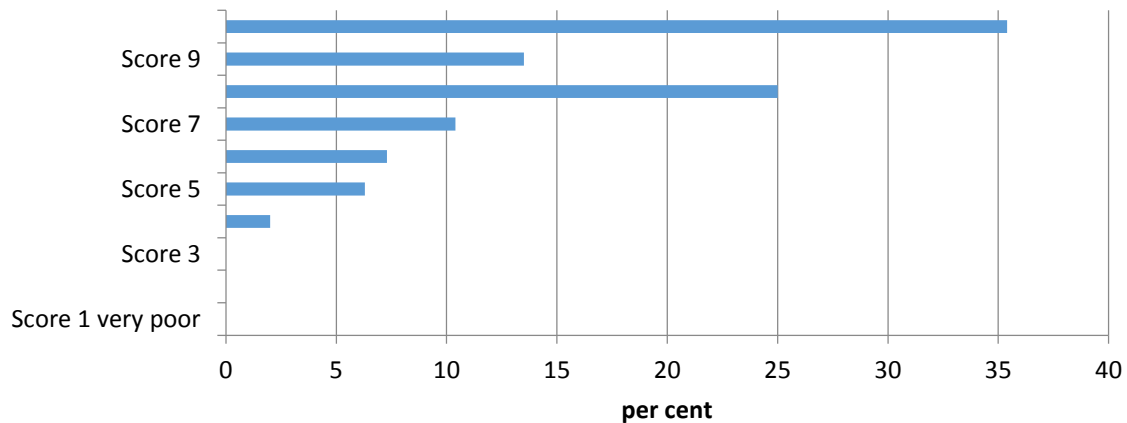
The survey also included several questions on how respondents felt about the overall performance of the NNRC. The following graphs show the results:



Graph 3 Do you think the NNRC facilitates and supports the community to achieve good NRM outcomes?



Graph 4 Overall, how would you rate the NNRC as a community, mostly volunteer, organisation?



Committee's Response

Again, while the Committee is heartened by these positive responses, it considers that there is room for improvement and will continue to focus its efforts to this end.

The state of our local natural resources

The remaining questions in this survey asked respondents for their opinion of the state or condition of the main natural resources in our region. They were asked to score the resource condition on a scale of one to ten, one being very poor condition and ten being in pristine condition. These results will help the NNRC to set some of its priorities for the future. The results from a survey such as this can, of course, only give a rough indication of what peoples' perceptions are of the state of our natural resources, and guide to priorities for future concentration of effort.

In general, respondents gave relatively high scores for the state of our beaches and coastline, conservation parks such as Deep Creek and to a somewhat lesser extent, the coastal dunes and marine environment. The lowest scores on average were given for the state of our rivers, native flora and wildlife, and especially town parks and street scapes.

The following dot points summaries comments made on the state of the region's natural resources.

- Some pollution of the marine environment, also coastal dunes and rivers, and loss of native species.
- Ignorant dog owners are the biggest problem especially at beaches and near nesting birds.
- Deep creek is a very beautiful place.
- The threat of human development and tourism needs to be closely monitored to protect the amazing natural resources of the Fleurieu Peninsula.
- Towns and streetscapes need increased tree planting using native or food species. Storm water management is also an issue. Bungala River needs attention.
- We need to protect the dunes by removing feral plants and building local walks to keep people off the dunes. People will always be here and more will come so it is no good herding them down the same goat track in the hope that they will adhere to the signage in keep off areas. People are wandering all over the dunes in the tourist season making their own tracks because there is not enough access eg loop walks to enjoy the area.
- I would like to see better walking areas created around Second Valley.
- Some town street scapes have a lot of money / attention, others not so much. I realise that this is not the NNRC fault. Council has blinkers on outside Yankalilla/Normanville/Carrackalinga.
- While landowners are still allowed to let their stock access rivers and streams, the problem of river bank erosion, weed infestation and poor water quality continues.

- Rivers and estuaries are improving – lots of work on the Bungala, but the mouth of the Carrackalinga Creek is a bit gross at times. This may be natural from sand build up but it can smell bad. I scored an 8 for parks and street scapes – it is definitely improving but it started from a very low base. Walking tracks in some conservation parks could be improved, although Deep Creek is good.
- Bungala River is beginning to come back to its natural state but more involvement is required. Better management is also required around the more urbanised coastal regions. Rubbish from shore fishers litters the less frequented accessible parts of the coast. Often seen in summer are the drag line fishing boats off shore. This has to be stopped.

The Fleurieu Peninsula is blessed with several iconic natural resources and those such as beaches and dunes are generally considered to be in reasonably good condition. Where some concerns have been expressed, especially on the condition of our rivers and street scapes, there may be scope for the NNRC to direct a greater proportion of its resources to bringing to the attention of the community and relevant organizations issues relating to these resources.