

# *Brief History of the Coal Loader Community Garden*

*Sustainability Centre, located on the old Coal Loader site, Waverton Peninsula.*

## *Community consultation, 2005-2007*

North Sydney Council invited community participation in the planning and design process for the Coal Loader Sustainability Centre. Various sustainability programs were discussed, including establishing a community garden.

## *Humble beginnings, winter 2007*

Locals were invited by Council, under the "Streets Alive" program, to attend a "No Dig" garden demonstration at the Coal Loader site.

## *Sydney Organic Gardens, spring 2007-summer 2009*

Council invited locals to set up an organic veggie garden and employed "Sydney Organic Gardens" to assist the community. Everyone was welcome. Council provided a tool shed, gardening equipment and plants. We set up compost bins and a worm farm and collected manure from the Police Horse Stables.

## *Pond Garden, begun 2007*

The previous caretakers on the site had built a small sandstone pond and we created several small garden beds around it. We laid pathways using recycled pavers, spread soil and mulch, and began planting.

## *Crate Garden, begun 2008*

Council purchased hardwood planting crates which could be moved with a forklift when necessary, because of construction work on site. We sealed the inside, added a gravel base for drainage and a covering of geotex fabric, then filled crates with soil.

## *Keyhole Garden, begun 2009*

We built two keyhole garden beds after receiving a grant for \$1,000 from the ABC's "Australian Open Garden Scheme". We used recycled brick pavers to construct the walls, and the grant paid for soil, plants, mulch and archways.

## *Four Seasons Veggie Gardening Workshops, 2010*

Council continued to support us by funding 10 free Vegetable Gardening Workshops run by "Sydney Organic Gardens" on site. These attracted many other people, including a group who were setting up their own community garden in Mosman.

## *Our Community Garden, 2009-2011*

Our gardening group (10-20 participants) has become more self-reliant since 2009, and we hold monthly meetings that are attended by Council.

We garden communally and share our weekly harvest among all present.

Participants have donated plants and other items, including an Aerobin, wooden barrels for citrus trees and more recently two chooks.

## *Chook Run, begun 2011*

Council repaired the old chook house on site and erected a wire-fenced enclosure. Many from our gardening group now tend our small flock of free-range chooks, and are rewarded with freshly laid eggs.