

# MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

## *National Tree Day 2016 Evaluation*

### BACKGROUND

Mitchell Shire Council has been supporting National Tree Day since 2001, supplying thousands of native plants, guards and stakes to local community groups and schools and running public tree planting events with our community partners.

National Tree Day 2016 in Mitchell Shire saw over 4,000 plants planted on 15 public land sites throughout the shire. At least 730 volunteers were involved, including school students, scouts, community groups and members of the wider Mitchell community.

Participants in this year's National Tree Day events were asked to complete an evaluation. The survey was developed by Council's Environment staff to provide valuable baseline data for monitoring and evaluation purposes and also to assist in making next year's Tree Day even better!

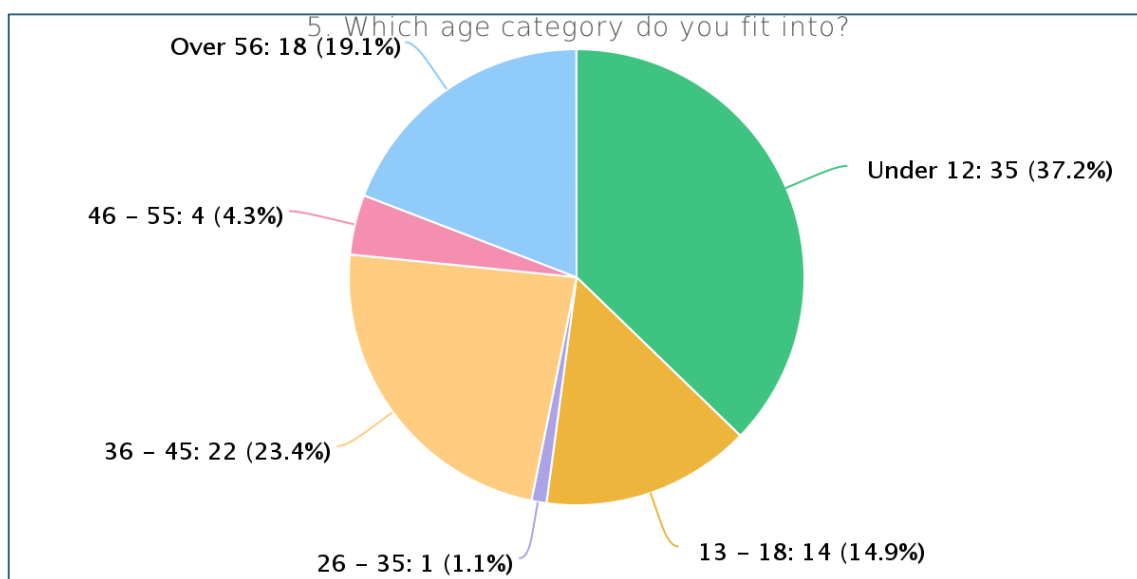
The survey was available online and hard copy. A group survey was also developed and mailed to all site supervisors (to be undertaken on site via a show of hands). All data was then entered into the Mitchell Shire Engaging Mitchell website for analysis.

The survey was open from mid-July to mid-September 2016

### WHO WAS INVOLVED IN NATIONAL TREE DAY 2016?

A total of 94 surveys were received (77 hard copy surveys and 17 online). These represented 7 of the 15 sites Mitchell Shire Council ran/supported this year. No surveys were received from schools.

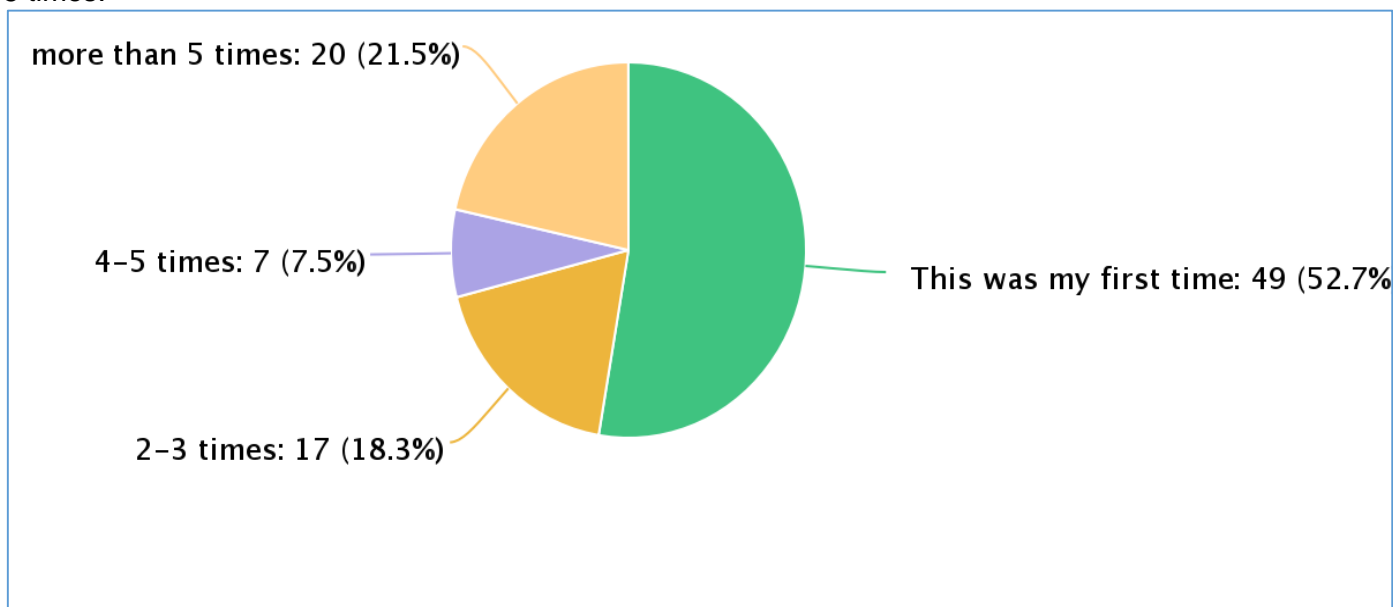
In regards to the survey respondents, there was an almost even split between male (52%) and female (48%) participants. The survey responses show that participants are generally primary school aged children, people aged 36-45 and people over 56. It could be generally summarised that our tree planting volunteers for 2016 were generally young families and retirees.



Even though all planting sites were in urban areas, interestingly one third of the participants came from rural areas of the Mitchell Shire.

## HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN NATIONAL TREE DAY?

More than half the participants were taking part in National Tree day planting for the first time. Interestingly there was also over 20% of the survey respondent who had been involved in National Tree day more than 5 times.



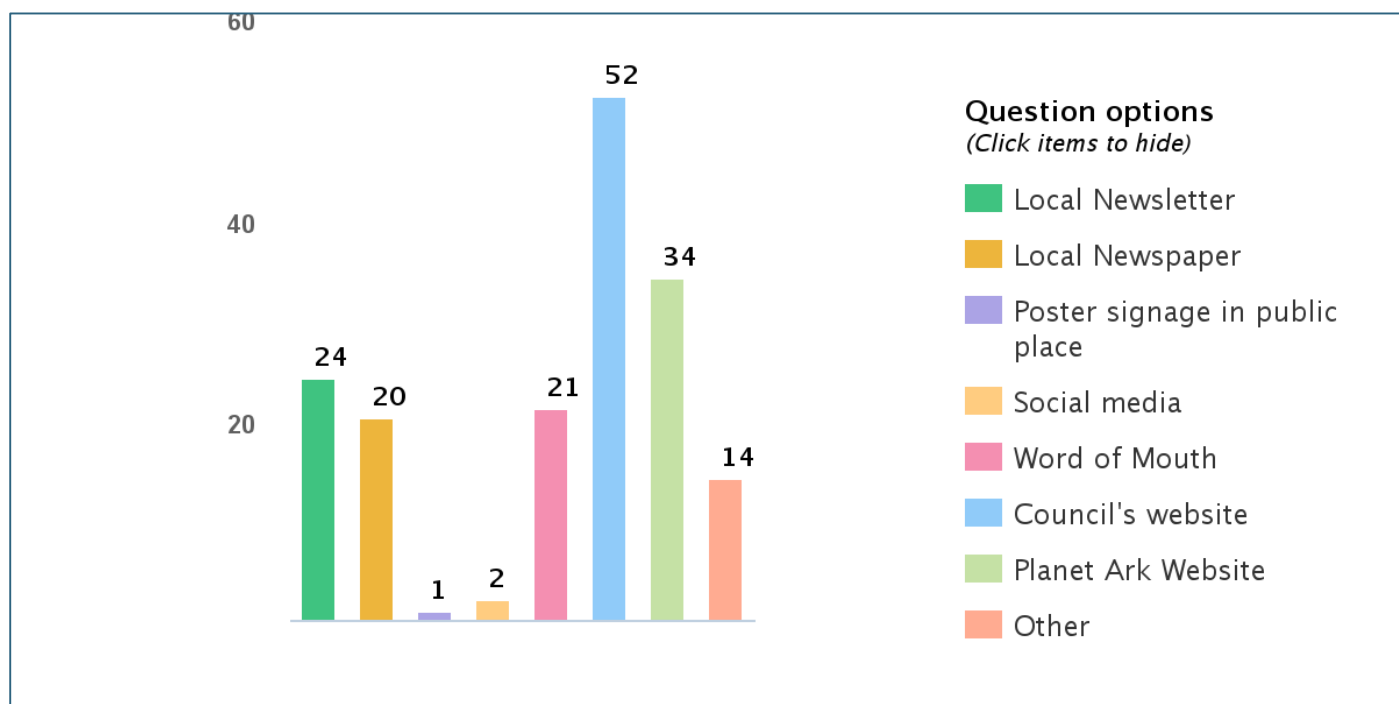
## ARE YOU LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED AGAIN?

Pleasingly all but 1 of the survey participants (93 people) indicated that they would like to be involved in National Tree Day events again.

Comments received from people who will be involved in Tree Day again were;

- *A member of Wallan Environment Group... Both participating in Schools Tree Day and National Tree day is a major event on our calendar.*
- *Because my mummy always goes to tree day!*
- *Good community event*
- *I recently moved to Wallan and rang Council for details of local environment groups having been involved in a Friends Group in my previous area for 24 years. I was put into contact with Wallan Environment Group and they told me about International Tree day.*
- *I will be involved again because I have a few good friends there, I can ride my bike a lot on all the different tracks and play on the equipment.*
- *It is great bonding with doing something for the environment*
- *Scout newsletter*
- *Seymour scouts*
- *Somebody has to do it. Parents are too busy, kids couldn't care less. Town has too few people.*
- *Thanks team. It was fun*
- *Very well organised event. It was a heap of fun while giving back to the environment.*
- *Well organised*
- *Well organised and the weather was very good to us this year!*
- *Wonderfully organised by the environment team*

## HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT NATIONAL TREE DAY?



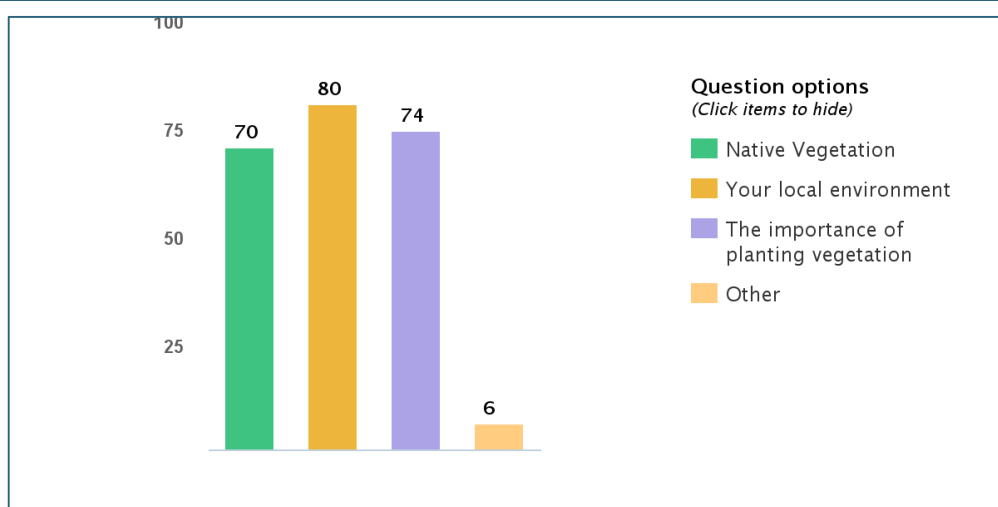
Overwhelmingly the survey respondents heard about local National Tree Day events on the Mitchell Shire Council website (52), with the Planet Ark website (34) being the second highest response. This reflects the importance of online communication.

Word of mouth and local newsletters also features highly (21 and 24 respectively), this highlights the importance of our local community networks.

## DID YOUR PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL TREE DAY 2016 INCREASE YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?

Participants were asked if their participation in National Tree Day 2016 had increased their skills and knowledge of Native Vegetation, The Local Environment and The Importance of Planting Native Vegetation.

95% of the participants stated that they had learnt something from being involved in National Tree Day 2016.



- 74% of the participants reported that they learnt about Native Vegetation,
- 78% learnt about the Importance of Planting Native Vegetation and
- 85% learnt about their Local Environment.

Other skills and knowledge gained included;

- *Horticulture*
- *How to plant trees better*
- *Local information of social value*
- *The beautiful views of the gorgeous landscape in our area*

## ARE YOU MORE LIKELY TO PLANT NATIVE SPECIES AT HOME AFTER BEING INVOLVED IN NATIONAL TREE DAY 2016?

***Pleasingly over 95% of the survey respondents indicated that they are more likely to plant native plants at home as a result of being involved in National Tree Day events.***

This highlights that Mitchell Shire National Tree Day events deliver multiple outcomes to our community - not just the obvious environmental benefits such as increasing native biodiversity and provision of habitat, but the events also lead to increased knowledge of our local environment and how to best manage and enhance it and also leads to longer term behaviour change for improved environmental outcomes.

## HOW COULD NATIONAL TREE DAY BE IMPROVED?

When asked how National Tree Day could be improved a number of responses were received, these have been grouped into the following 4 general themes.

### 1. Advertising

- *Better Advertisement*
- *Better publicity of the planting sites and times for planting*
- *Greater publicity*
- *Lots of local promotion*
- *Provide earlier notification with greater detail on where and when.*
- *Some posters in the local shops/library/doctors surgeries etc. would publicise the events more. Not everyone goes to Planet Ark to check details. But seeing posters quite incidentally would bring it to people's attention.*
- *Would have been nice if the planting days were advertised in the local paper.*

### 2. Increased number of volunteers

- *More participants= more plantings and more education re local environment*
- *More Volunteers (6)*
- *More volunteers. Incentives*
- *If I had some more friends my age at the planting*
- *If more people offered their time and help imagine how much could be done!*
- *Very difficult in a small town. Mums are busy getting kids to sport and dads getting the weekend wood in. Too few other residents. Kids just not interested. No one ever turns up. Maybe if people could bring along their own little label or something as a silent tribute to loved ones or pets and put on some of the trees they plant. Need something to get people off their bums. The environment doesn't do it.*

### 3. More Involvement from Council

- *More participation by Council*
- *Have a representative of Council present to have a quick chat about the day and to thank the volunteers at the end.*

#### 4. Other suggestions and feedback

- *Maybe a bit of a first-hand story from a first time participant, something that will show other newbies what they can expect!*
- *More cake and bickies.*
- *It's great already*
- *By keeping going*
- *I had a great time so I do not know how you could improve it.*

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The following general comments were also received from survey respondents;

- *A fantastic initiative. I am now looking at increasing vegetation on my property nearby.*
- *Golf club needs some colour around the greens*
- *Had two very successful days. Lovely seeing the kids gain further opportunities to learn and plant.*
- *Wonderful day on Sunday planting lots of understory and riparian plants down at the creek:*
- *Happy to be involved*
- *I liked the fact that it was a fairly contained planting - something that was manageable for the first timer!*
- *Stunning location and perfect weather - nicely organised!*
- *It was a beautiful day and sunny not like all other days.*
- *Loved getting out with my colleagues and planting some trees.*
- *Mostly community group members, would be good if we could get some other people*
- *Part of Seymour scout group - we discussed the importance of planting trees at our weekly meetings.*
- *Prickly trees*
- *Thanks to Mitchell Shire Council for giving us the trees.*
- *Thankyou Mitchell Shire Council for supporting this event yet again!*
- *The Puckapunyal Scout group have been active participants for about the past 10 years.*
- *The weather was perfect this year.*
- *Another Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group project*
- *Thought the day was very well planned and the planting site well prepared. The staff present on the day knew their subject matter and were both friendly and organised.*
- *Tree day is used to supplement scouts badge work as a practical example of what can be achieved.*
- *The established method of having the holes pre drilled allows greater enjoyment for the younger children.*
- *Very well organised. Well done everyone involved.*

### FEEDBACK LOOP

Just over one third of the survey participants have requested a copy of the survey summary. In accordance with Council's Community Engagement Framework, this summary will be provided to these respondents and made available to the general public on the Engaging Mitchell website.