

Guildford Laneway Case Study - Cumberland City Council

Background

Safer Cities: Her Way program is a collaborative partnership program between Transport for NSW and 10 pilot councils across NSW. The program is delivering demonstration projects aiming to improve perceptions of safety, particularly for women, girls and gender diverse people. Each project has been co-designed with local communities and are being evaluated for their impact to perceptions of safety.

Cumberland City Council undertook a range of engagement activity with the community and this revealed several shortcomings of the space which made women and girls feel uncomfortable and unsafe. This was due to the space being dull and grey, underutilised, dark and unlit, and generally lacking amenity. The revitalisation introduced new features in the form of artwork, seating, greenery, performance stages, lighting, kids' play equipment and smart technology.

Future Village was supplied initial concept design work that we then developed through to working and engineering drawings. We project managed the development as well as designed, built and installed the stage unit and all soft landscaping.



Before



After



Before



After

Smart technology has been introduced in various forms in Guildford Laneway including the addition of a multi-function pole, wireless device charging station, general power outlets, smart bin and sensors for environmental conditions and anonymised people movement.

The smart technology introduced in the laneway aims to make the space more welcoming by improving amenity, providing high quality facilities and enabling the collection of place-based data. The data collected helps the council to understand the impact of this demonstration project.



Before



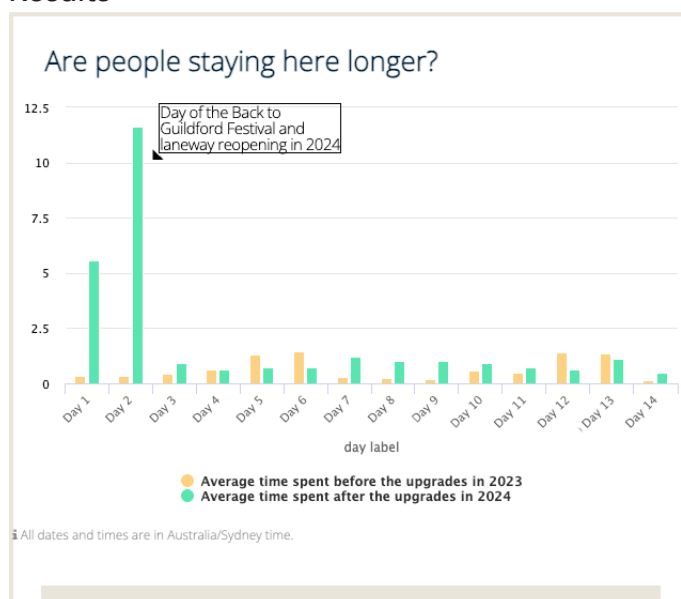
After

What is Cumberland City Council trying to understand?

How is the space being used at different times of the day and on different days of the week?
Where do people spend the most time in the laneway and for how long?
Do changes in local weather conditions impact the use of the laneway?
How has laneway usage changed after the upgrades?
Has there been a change in spend patterns in the surrounding businesses since the upgrades?
Has there been an impact in perceptions of safety amongst laneway users and the community following the upgrades?

The data insights can support Council in understanding the impact of the project in the usage of the space and identify patterns and trends, as well as inform future planning and decision making. The open data platform also empowers the community to use the data collected for their own analysis and research.

Results

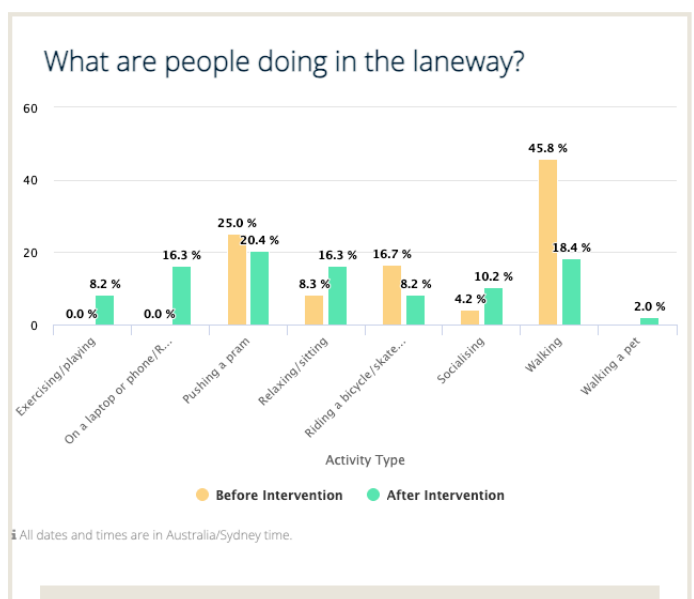


WHAT DOES THIS CHART MEAN?

This chart compares the change in the average time spent by visitors in the laneway over a 2-week period before and after the laneway upgrades using data obtained from a pedestrian sensor placed in the laneway.



Before the upgrades, most of the users just walked past whereas after the upgrades visitors spent more time in the laneway. While **people spent on average only 16-30 seconds last year, this year the average time spent increased to >1 minute** in the laneway after the upgrades.

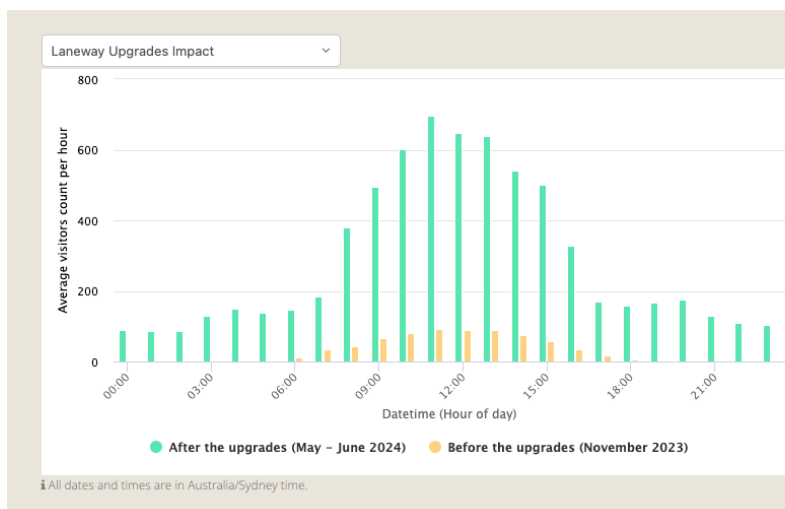


WHAT DOES THIS CHART MEAN?

The graph represents the frequency of different activities undertaken by laneway users prior to the upgrades and after the upgrades.



While a majority of people were observed walking across the laneway last year, this year's data shows a comparative increase in people engaging in activities other than walking. **An increase was noted in people socialising, exercising/playing, relaxing/sitting** which implies increased use of the new seating and play equipment in the laneway.



How has the number of visitors changed?

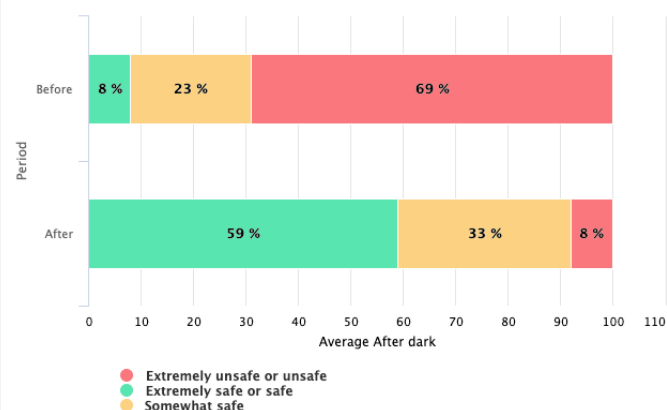
Pedestrian sensor data collected in the laneway over a 2-week period before and after the laneway upgrades has been used to measure the impact of the laneway upgrades.



The data collected indicates that the **number of laneway visitors increased 5-6x per day on average during the peak hours** following the upgrades this year. More people used the laneway after dark compared to last year which was another key goal of the project

[Data source](#)

Perceptions of safety after dark before and after the interventions.



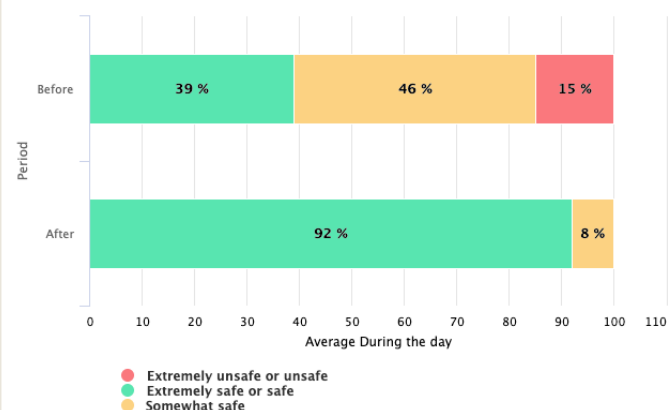
All dates and times are in Australia/Sydney time.

WHAT DOES THIS CHART MEAN?

This chart compares the data collected from surveys with local women and girls on their perceptions of safety **after dark** in the Guildford laneway, before and after the upgrades.

The proportion of participants who felt 'extremely safe' or 'safe' after dark **increased significantly from 8% to 59%, making them six times more likely to feel safer at night** after the upgrades. Improving the perceptions of safety for women and girls using this space after dark has been one of the key goals of this project.

Perceptions of safety during the day before and after the interventions.



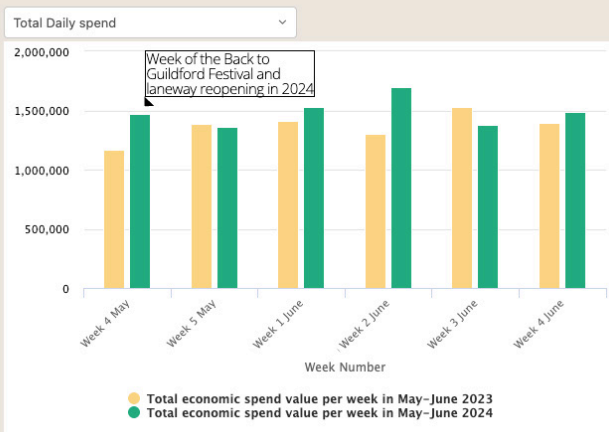
All dates and times are in Australia/Sydney time.

WHAT DOES THIS CHART MEAN?

This chart compares the data collected from surveys with local women and girls on their perceptions of safety in the Guildford laneway **during the day**, before and after the upgrades.

The participants sense of safety significantly improved during the day, **increasing from 39% who would feel 'extremely safe' or 'safe' to 92%, making them twice as likely to feel safe during the day** in the laneway after the upgrades. This reaffirms the positive impact of the laneway upgrades.

Have the spend patterns changed?



All dates and times are in Australia/Sydney time.



This graph compares the total weekly economic spend between May-June 2023 and May-June 2024 for the area around the laneway indicated by the map above.

The data shows a **significant increase in total spend and estimated number of card transactions in May-June 2024 compared to May-June 2023**, including in the week of the laneway reopening and the Back to Guildford festival (May, Week 4 in 2024). This further reinforces the positive impact of the laneway upgrades and the Back to Guildford festival on Guildford town centre.

Data and graphs supplied by Cumberland City Council : <https://data.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/pages/home/>

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