

South Kempsey Community Garden opens

The South Kempsey Community Garden was officially opened on Monday 7 June by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liz Campbell.

The garden, now known as 'The Gathering Place', was made possible by a grant from the Department of Health and Ageing under their Healthy Active Australia Schools and Community Grants program.

Ruth Thompson, Manager of Mid North Coast Regional Council for Social Development and project facilitator said, "The garden is a place where the community can gather and celebrate, and in the process learn more about gardening, healthy eating and healthy lifestyles".

"The Garden is not just about growing plants, fruit and vegetables, it's about growing community. We faced some challenges along the way, not least of which was dealing with several major floods, which postponed work at the site, but it is amazing what you can achieve when a whole community pulls together."

The Garden sits on Housing NSW land in Yarravel Street, South Kempsey and will be maintained by the South Kempsey Family Community Centre, which is auspiced by Kempsey Shire Council.

The completed garden has over 200 fruit and native trees, an outdoor kitchen facility, picnic tables and chairs, seed propagation shed, raised garden beds for vegetables and herbs, and a sensory garden. It features garden sculptures and murals created by local school children. In fact, local primary schools, high schools, TAFE community colleges, medical services, preschools, playgroups, employment services and a range of other community members and service all worked together to make the project a success.

In the future the Gathering Place will host garden clubs, TAFE students studying bush regeneration and land management, seed propagation, and healthy eating workshops and medial outreach services.

If you are interested in volunteering at, or using the garden, please call Mavis Symonds, Coordinator of the South Kempsey community Centre on 6562 1911.