

Sustainability Report 2020

Commentary on conservation and adaptive re-use of the Quarantine Station



Mawland Quarantine Station

Building S7, QStation

North Head Scenic Drive

North Head

www.qstation.com.au

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

NSW National Parks Wildlife Service

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STATEMENT BY MAWLAND QUARANTINE STATION PTY LIMITED

Statement by Maxwell Player and Suzanne Stanton 2020

Mawland is proud to present this Sustainability Report which reflects the ongoing monitoring of some 150 indicators across the cultural, environmental, social and economic aspects of the site and the activities of QStation.

It is worth noting that the site was closed on the following dates as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic

- 8 April to Mid-June full lockdown, site completely closed, gates closed, some public access by squeezing through and over closed gates, security on site
- Mid-June through mid-August – site open to public to sunset for walking, biking etc, but hotel operating Fri-Sun only, security on site at all times
- Mid-August hotel operations reopened 7days and site open to public to sunset for walking, biking
- 17-18 October – hotel operations closed because of NPWS Hazard Reduction burn closure of North Head
- 21 Dec 2020- 5 Jan 2021- closed for Northern Beaches lockdown including Xmas day, Boxing Day and NYE , site completely closed, gates closed , some public access by squeezing through and over closed gates, security on site

Mawland Group has completed work on all operational buildings on site and continues to conduct extensive conservation, maintenance and interpretive works. Major upgrades and work continue on infrastructure such as roadways, sewer, signage and electricity supply. Mawland constantly concentrates on improving our environmental footprint and have revised our maintenance, cleaning, transport and acquisitions policies to ensure all aspects of our operations on the site offer the best environmental outcomes for the Park.

Conservation continues on the moveable heritage collection and our curator is concentrating on cleaning, refreshing of display and interpretational signage of our collection.

Lady Jean Foley's book *Healing and Burials at Sydney's North Head* along with the experiences we all had during the pandemic will become a valuable new tool in the revamping of our tour products in 2021.

When QStation was open in 2020, Operations were focussed on increasing revenue and improving the guest experience to ensure that Q Station builds up a solid operating and revenue base.

Planned Open days were cancelled as a result of the pandemic. With approval of DOP, the 2020 Open Days were held as part of the Les Sculpture Refusee Exhibition on site, with all outdoor activities due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, the weather was inclement on these days, and the site was evacuated on 17 October due to the NPWS Hazard burn complications on North Head.

There were no school excursions to QStation in 2020 because of the State Government policy to curtail excursions during the pandemic. Similarly, there were very few organised visits from community groups, retirees etc. Where possible, during hiatus 'in the pandemic tour products were offered to the public, with limited take-up.

Mawland remains active in the local and wider community, participating in the Manly Chamber of Commerce, North Head Stakeholders Group, Manly Council Sustainable Tourism Committee, Manly Food and Wine Festival, Manly Jazz Festival, Fund Raising for Bear Cottage, The Rainbow Club, Oxfam, local charities, schools and sporting clubs. QStation remains committed to continued support of the NGO not for profit Sala Bai Hotel School in Siem Reap Cambodia.

Monitoring of bandicoots, seagrass and vermin was continued throughout the year and is detailed in the 2020 IMAMS Reports and Quarterly Monitoring Data prepared by NPWS. Young stingrays visited the site in abundance in 2020. As reported in 2019 ASR huge storm in November 2019 caused the loss of one of the largest historic coral trees on site and NPWS and Mawland continue discussions towards an appropriate replacement.

ACCOR Hotels operates the hotel on the site by franchise in accordance with their exacting international standards. This appointment is purely operational and requires strict adherence to the terms of the Lease. Mawland remains the key stakeholder and point of contact for the purposes of lease compliance and governance, heritage and cultural maintenance and financial arrangements with The Office of Environment and Heritage.

Mawland is proud to be associated with this wonderful site and has integrated environmental management and sustainable management practices into operation of a successful hotel. We are proud that the success of the site is bringing local and international awareness of this iconic Sydney site and allows the hopes and dreams of those who passed through it to be remembered.

Max Player and Suzanne Stanton (Directors)

As Q Station begins a confident emergence from the challenges of 2020, it is the unique experience of history and fine accommodation offered that sets it apart. Accor continues its enthusiastic support of Q Station working with The Mawland Group to grow and develop the offering in to the future. Q Station holds a major piece of Australian history with over 156 years of quarantine activities and as a gateway to ensure the future health of the then, developing nation. Never before has this history been so connected to modern day life. It is this connection that has our country embracing local, regional and national tourism and bringing them to sites like Quarantine Station.

Steve Carrodus

General Manager

Q Station Sydney Harbour National Park Manly

STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

Statement by Deon van Rensburg

The Quarantine Station Annual Sustainability Report summarises the operational performance of the North Head Quarantine Station conservation and adaptive reuse project, which is being undertaken within Sydney Harbour National Park.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the operation of Quarantine Station throughout 2020, with several closures as noted in the statement from Mawland.

Despite the difficulties presented by COVID-19, implementation of the project continued throughout 2020 with notable achievements including:

- Ongoing implementation of monitoring programs for little penguin and long-nosed bandicoot threatened populations.
- Continuing QSCCC meetings throughout
- Sustainability monitoring and reporting on a diverse range of conservation and tourism indices.

The Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE) and Mawlands Quarantine Station (MQS) continued to work together throughout significant challenges presented by COVID-19 to design and deliver unique tourism experiences, address ongoing planning approval obligations associated with cultural heritage and environmental sustainability as well as meet community expectations in 2020.

Deon van Rensburg

Director Greater Sydney Branch
Park Operations
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

1. BACKGROUND

This is the 2020 Sustainability Report for the site known as the former North Head Quarantine Station, its tourism activities and business.



Site map of North Head Quarantine Station

The site is leased to Mawland Quarantine Station (MQS) by the Minister administering the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. The Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE), of which National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is a part of, administers the lease on behalf of the Minister. The day-to-day operation on the site is branded as QStation.

This report has been prepared by MQS and the DPIE. The report satisfies condition 211 of the North Head Quarantine Station Environmental Management Plan 2005.

Management and reporting on the site is based on the quadruple-bottom line objectives for the site.

These objectives cover the following dimensions:

1. Environmental;
2. Cultural;
3. Social;
4. Economic;

2. OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY

2.1 Means of measuring sustainability

MQS has developed an Integrated Monitoring and Adaptive Management System (IMAMS) to monitor the sustainability of the Q Station activity across the environmental, cultural, social and economic dimensions. Following are the four components of the IMAMS and its nine optimal conditions that define sustainability on the site. If this integrated set of environmental, cultural, social and economic optimal conditions can be simultaneously achieved, then the operation could be nearing a full state of sustainability. The IMAMS measures how close the operation is to this desired position, and introduces changes to management practices to bring it closer

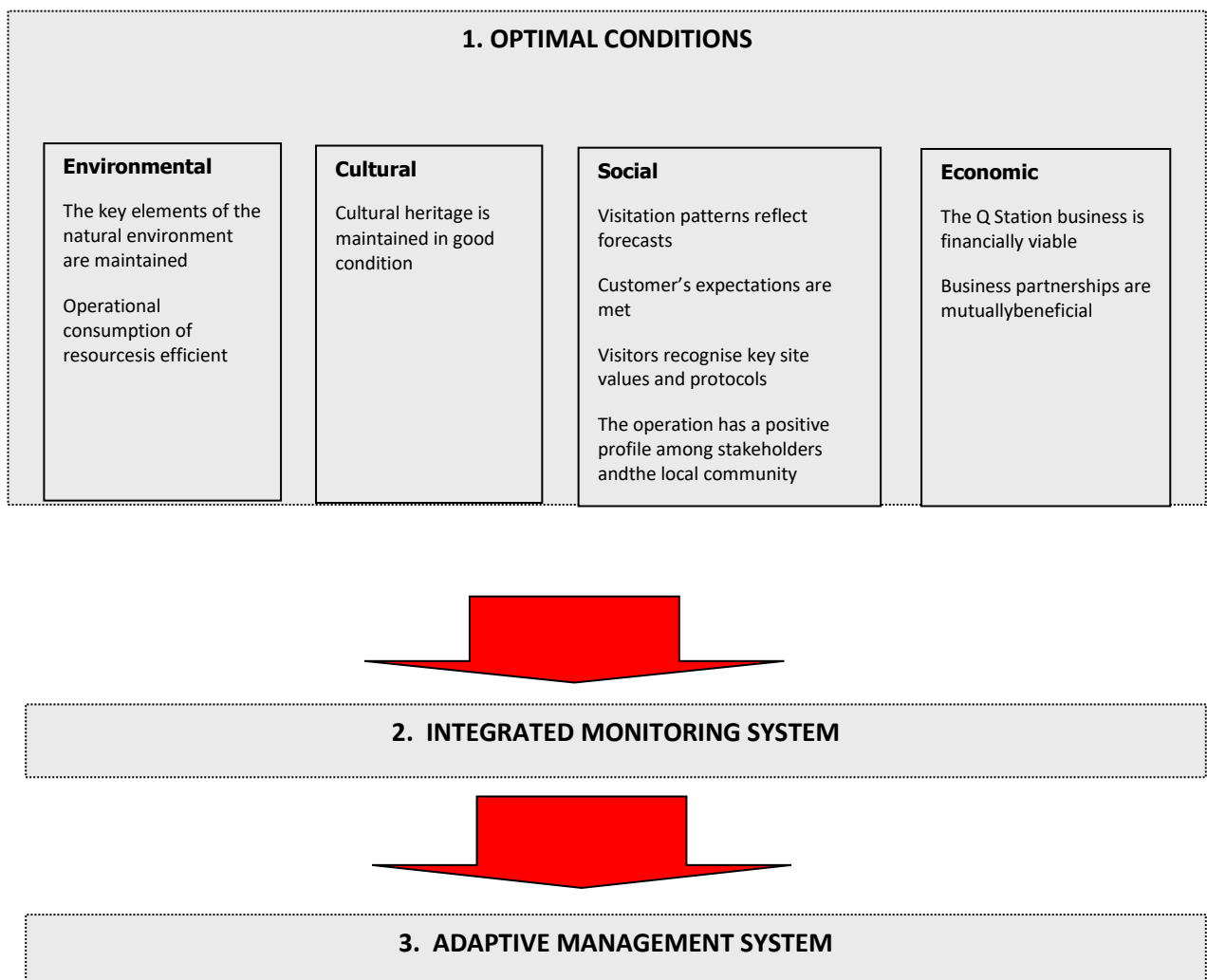


Figure 2.1 The integrated monitoring and adaptive management system and its nine optimal conditions that define sustainability on the site

The IMAMS is monitoring and reporting over 150 indicators. It is proposed that these indicators will be reviewed in the next year and the reporting criteria reduced as relevant to the state of the site and the business.

2.2 Sustainability index

2.2.1 Overall Performance

In 2020 the overall sustainability of the activity scored 0.95 out of 1, which is similar to score of 95%.

There were excellent performances in achieving environmental, social sustainability but Mawland remains concerned as to the economic performance sustainability of the site. Anecdotally Mawland believes that this could be due to each and all of the following:

- Demands as to governance placed on site by the Conditions of Consent
- Unreasonable burdens of financial expectations in Lease
- Unusual nature of the site causing additional staffing and transport demands
- High cost of compliance with Conditions of Approval which require modification.
- 2020 COVID 19 Pandemic

The economic performance of QStation has still not reached that of comparable properties in the market segment. The extensive and complex environmental compliance continues to soak up significant management expertise that would normally be focussed on further business stimulus and cost management.

Table 2.2 - Historic Performance of Sustainability Index and its four dimensions

Report	Environmental	Cultural	Social	Economic	Overall
1-10-2007	1.00	0.94	0.88	1.00	0.96
1-4-2008	0.99	0.93	0.98	1.00	0.97
31-12-2008	0.84	0.68	0.87	0.63	0.76
30-6-2009	0.90	0.68	0.91	0.59	0.77
31-12-2009	0.91	0.71	0.87	0.67	0.79
30-6-2010	0.95	0.88	0.86	0.66	0.84
30-12-2010	0.92	0.88	0.92	0.66	0.84
30-12-2011	Audit				
30-12-2012	Audit				
30-12-2013					
30-12-2014					
30-12-2015	0.86	0.86	0.93	0.9	0.89
30-12-2016	0.89	0.70	1.00	0.94	0.88
30-12-2017	0.91	0.70	0.96	0.9	0.87
2018	Audit				
2019	1.0	0.92	1.0	0.96	0.97
2020	0.94	0.92	1.0	0.92	0.95

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1 Summary reporting on headline indicators

Quarantine Station's natural environment overall is looking healthy. The IMAMS overall index score is 0.95 out of 1. The key elements of the natural environment are being maintained and operational consumption of resources is efficient. Arrangements with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW, require Mawland to operate and fund programmes to protect and increase the natural environment, particularly by landscape management and protection of these species. Mawland operates the site under strict set of Conditions of Planning Approval and our operations are carefully monitored to ensure sustainability and protection of the site. In particular the populations of long-nosed bandicoots and little penguins when on site are continuously monitored and Mawland constantly educates our staff, visitors and suppliers about these species through an ongoing induction and education programme.

The strongest performing areas were the minimisation of any impacts associated with traffic, light, soil and erosion, waste and resource use. Some of these areas are discussed below.

The weaker performing areas were little penguin population health, cultural landscape condition, aboriginal site condition, yield, occupancy and profitability.

QStation Environment Initiatives

QStation operates in compliance with the strict environmental compliance policies of the Accor Group, in particular as regards recycling, acquisitions and cleaning supplies.

Products used on site are wherever possible environmentally compatible and laundry, guest supplies and cleaning products are environmentally friendly. We request our guests to be environmentally considerate with their use of towels, linen, plastics and energy on site.

Our websites, collateral, room compendiums and all directional/ interpretive signage on site stresses our policy of minimal interference with the environment of the site, its flora and fauna and in particular the native animals which we steward on behalf of our guests.

Energy

QStation is constantly balancing saving energy with re-use of a heritage site which has aging, but heritage protected, infrastructure. The retrofitting or new installation of "green" energy infrastructure is generally not available to us, so we aim for sustainability however possible in limited constraints. In 2020 Mawland will discuss the possibility of installing solar power to the site, if same is acceptable to NPWS

Waste

Kitchen waste is monitored biocycled and separated. Our waste disposal protocols ensure all waste is cleaned and separated for recycling, minimising land fill and general waste. Pest and predator control is organic.

So far as possible cars are excluded from the site and all visitors are transported in our small buses to ensure serenity and protection of the flora and fauna.

Natural bush trimmings are mulched and used on site for gardens and compost.

Water

Roof Water is recycled by equipment installed for garden watering and there are external showers at the beach which use rainwater. Some waste water is installed for outdoor use. We plan to install a solar farm to contribute to our electricity use and for educational purposes. We are not permitted to install solar fixtures on the building due to their heritage nature. Our shower heads have restricted flow. Grey water in Buildings P11 and 12 is recycled- these are the only buildings capable of retro installation of this system.

Recycling

The adaptive re-use of the site is the ultimate form of recycling! Products used on site are wherever possible environmentally compatible and laundry, guest supplies and cleaning products are environmentally friendly. We request our guests to be environmentally considerate with their use of towels, linen and products on site. Recycling is used wherever possible and all paper products and glass are recycled.

During renovations and upgrading of the site materials were reused and recycled wherever possible, often using traditional heritage methods and craftspeople. Accommodation rooms are not air-conditioned, but are cooled by airflow and ceiling fans. Our wide verandahs give shade and protection from the heat to accommodation rooms. All buildings have been retrofitted with insulation wherever possible and roof sheeting/tiles have been coated with a reflective paint to promote cooling.

Noise

No noise complaints were received by QStation in 2020

Seagrass

EcoDivers continue to monitor sea grass off QStation and have reported maintenance of the 2018 status quo as regards the sea grass coverage.

Table 3.1 Performance of Environmental Headline Indicators 2020

<u>Index Environment Jan 2020 to Dec 2020</u>	
Erosion and runoff	1
Fauna impacts	1
Light impacts	1
Little Penguin population health	0
Long-nosed Bandicoot population health	1
Native vegetation health	1
Noise impacts	1
Predators and pests	0.666667
Resource use	1

Seagrass health	1
Stormwater quality and quantity	1
Waste generation	1
Environment index	

3.2 Case Studies

The closure of the site during some of the 2020 Covid19 pandemic allowed Mawland to concentrate on infrastructure and building maintenance.

QStation Environmental Continuing Initiatives 2020

- Bin enclosures at wharf (x2) and P27 along with signage to separate general waste, bottle & plastic recycling, cardboard and paper recycling
- Small bins in café for guests to separate the waste (as above)
- Still and sparkling water refills in café – Moda system
- Further Reducing the variety of plastic drinks sold in the café
- No plastic straws or cutlery are used on site
- Use of paper cups for takeaway drinks is discouraged and use of “ keep cups” was rewarded when permitted during pandemic
- Collecting coffee grinds for guests to take home to compost
- Soap Aid – recycling of unused soap products to overseas aid
- Continued endorsement for guests to clean the beach in return for a coffee/drink
- Artist in Residence using beach rubbish for artwork
- Use of TLC Cleaning products and removed bleach where possible from cleaning rooms and public areas
 - Bathroom Buddy - <https://tlccommercial.com.au/product/bathroom-buddy-500ml/>
 - The Throne - <https://tlccommercial.com.au/product/the-throne-500ml/>

Community Engagement and Academic Participation

QStation is an active member of the North Head Stakeholder’s Group and participates in all that Group’s activities, in particular the construction of traffic calming devices on scenic drive to protect the endangered bandicoot population.

Many of our staff are trained and active members of WIRES. We regularly invite members of local community groups on site to promote the re-use and sustainability of our operations.

Bushlink Environmental Report – Q Station 2020

Bushlink have previously worked across various sites to remove Weeds of National Significance (WONS), noxious, and environmental weeds, and encourage regeneration of native species. Corporate groups who have joined us onsite have had an incredibly positive impact on this work, as their enthusiasm and focus has allowed for a greater scope of the sites to be covered.

Unfortunately, due to the Pandemic Bushlink did not operate from March 2020. In Jan-Feb 2020 poor air quality due to bushfires hampered work as many Bushlink staff are immune compromised.

NPWS CASE STUDY 1. Bluefish Banksia Hazard Reduction and North Head fire recovery

The planned hazard reduction burn at North Head on October 17 spotted over control lines and resulted in 25% of the 300 hectare headland being burnt. The fire impacted built and natural assets - fencing surrounding the Fairfax walking track and associated lookouts was destroyed, 25 hectares of the Endangered Ecological Community Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS) burnt, and habitat for the Long-nosed bandicoot, bush rat, eastern pygmy possum and brown antechinus was impacted.

Although the impacts of the fire were initially thought to be severe, assessment of the fireground revealed fire intensity was within prescription for the affected vegetation communities. The ESBS found on North Head is the largest remaining remnant in Sydney. While it is unfortunate that a relatively large area of ESBS was burnt, ESBS is a fire adapted ecological community and is expected to respond positively to the fire, with germination from the seed bank and re-sprouting of species.

The threatened long-nosed bandicoot (LNB) population and 3 reintroduced species (eastern pygmy possum, brown antechinus and bush rat) utilise habitat in the fire affected area. Fauna search and rescue operation in the days following fire found 13 injured mammals and reptiles that were treated by Taronga Wildlife Hospital. A range of healthy fauna including bandicoots, echidnas and ringtails have been seen foraging in the fire affected areas, indicating food supplies are available.

NPWS is working partners and experts including Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT), Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Taronga, Sydney University and Northern Beaches Council to implement a best practice and tenure neutral fire recovery program. The fire recovery program has already commenced, with an initial focus on providing safe visitor access, artificial habitat, monitoring of fauna populations, and increasing the level of weed control and pest animal control as the vegetation returns.

NPWS CASE STUDY 2. Long nosed bandicoot surveys

A Long-nosed bandicoot population at North Head is listed as endangered under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. The population is monitored using a cage trapping survey to monitor their numbers, health and breeding success and how they are responding to threats, such as habitat loss, predation by dogs and foxes, inbreeding and disease.

Doing the May 2020 census survey with Covid-19 restrictions in place was challenging but well managed with procedures and PPE. Without volunteers to help, approved animal handlers from NPWS (GSB and park programs), EES, Taronga, Northern Beaches Council and three contracted ecologists were assisted by staff from across the branch and colleagues in EES which gave many new recruits good insight into what's involved in fauna surveys.

A preliminary count from the May 2020 survey identified 134 individual bandicoots from 224 captures of bandicoots. 114 individuals were marked in May 2018 and 113 in May 2016, so the population appears to be doing well. However, it is important we look more closely at other factors like the sex, age, distribution and preferred habitat.

A Population Viability Assessment based on data from 2015 – 2020 is in preparation by the University of Sydney; the findings of the PVA can help NPWS and the North Head stakeholders group make informed land management decisions to support the ongoing viability of the population.

The Australian Registry of Wildlife Health (Taronga Conservation Society Australia) also participates in this program through blood collection and tissue sampling from bandicoots, native and introduced rats to contribute to research into pathogens including tick borne diseases, in invasive species and native wildlife. Contributing to Taronga's work seemed even more significant given the impacts of the zoonotic Coronavirus.

The native bush rat is one of the most common species of rat in Australia but disappeared from North Head and was reintroduced in recent years. The data from 40 marked individuals from 49 total captures during the survey will be included in research led by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to monitor the health, abundance and distribution of native rats across the headland since reintroduction.

NPWS CASE STUDY 3. Little Penguin Colony

Four Penguins were found dead during the 2020 breeding season. NPWS worked side by side with partner agencies, stakeholders and volunteers to ensure the population was protected.

NPWS wants to acknowledge the extraordinary dedication and valuable work of the National Parks volunteer Penguin Wardens, and to thank all North Head stakeholders and the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health for their continued support.

The Little Penguin carcasses were taken to the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health at Taronga for necropsy. Two penguins were confirmed to have been killed by a fox, one drowned, and one believed to have been killed by a fox.

NPWS implements a range of preventative and reactive controls to protect the Little Penguin population including:

- Ongoing 1080 poison baiting program to control foxes. 1080 baits are laid throughout the year at a number of locations across the headland. When a fox is detected NPWS increase the frequency of baiting. A Fox was dispatched with this method in July this year.
- Scent detection dogs are used early in the breeding season to determine if predators (fox, domestic dog and cat) are active on the headland. Scent detection dogs operated on the headland twice in May and detected one male fox. NPWS responded with increased frequency of baiting and commenced a soft jaw trapping program in June
- Soft jaw traps are deployed across the headland prior to the beginning of the breeding season. Additional traps were deployed when fox activity was detected. From the start of June - mid August NPWS invested in over 2000 soft-jaw trapping events. That no fox was trapped is typical that foxes are very difficult to trap when in low abundance
- Fox lights are used in the breeding season as a predator deterrence. The fox lights are a computer controlled light system that gives the impression of someone patrolling during the hours of darkness
- A network of fauna monitoring cameras are in place across North Head to monitor fox presence and activity
- Penguin Warden volunteers protected breeding areas at dawn and dusk and monitor beaches for fox prints daily
- Shooting operation was deployed for 4 nights between Thursday 27 August and Sunday 30 August. The fox was not sighted over this period.

A male fox was trapped at Collins Beach on Thursday 10 September and was dispatched. The fox may or may not have been responsible for penguin predation this season. As there are no distinguishing features on the fox, we are unable to tell if it the same fox seen on monitoring cameras. Fortunately, no further penguins were killed by fox predation following the capture of this fox.

Despite all the work that has and is being done, the threats to populations of wild animals can never be eliminated. NPWS will continue to work hard to minimise impacts to the little penguin population and is grateful to dedicated neighbours, volunteers and stakeholders at North Head.

4. CULTURAL HERITAGE ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1 Summary reporting on headline indicators

The Quarantine Station's cultural environment overall index score was 0.92 out of 1 in 2020. Overall the cultural heritage is being maintained in good condition.

The strongest performing areas were the Moveable Heritage Collection, infrastructure and building condition. The Moveable heritage collection continues to be constantly monitored, curated and restored and there have been improvements to the efficiency of and displays in the Visitor's centre and Interpretation. The Collection has been largely catalogued and is gradually being placed on E Hive to allow better public access to the Moveable Heritage Items, this new technology is allowing efficient use of the collection for researchers, educators and students. Reports are prepared by our Curator as to Collection Management and Research, Public Enquiries, signage and display development, intern and volunteer management and Grant applications.

During 2020 MQS again spent considerable resources on stabilising road edges, asphaltting junctions and re-sealing several sections of road and paths across the site. Bicycle and walking lanes have been marked out and the smaller front gate is left open in daylight hours to allow cyclists and walkers to access the site on these tracks, with the help of maps available at Reception and improved wayfinding signage. Progressive maintenance continues to all buildings on site. Every six months all buildings continue to be washed down and touched up as necessary with paint or sealant. The interior of rooms is also progressively maintained. Some buildings also need further conservation works especially those exposed to more extreme weather, which is accelerating wear and tear.

The following **specific works** have continued in the Report period:

- Glasshouse-further significant glass and structural repair following storm damage, refresh and refurbish
- Museum- Refresh displays
- Restore Directional Markers
- Vegetation work conducted in accordance with Landscape Management Plan
- Opening up of cultural road behind Third Class Precinct between p21 and S9
- Refurbishment and opening of pathway to Mariposa monument
- Upgrade all interpretational signage.

The weakest performing cultural area was cultural landscape condition and Aboriginal site condition. "Clearly differentiated cultural landscape representing the Aviation Phase" cannot be represented because of the NPWS preferred method of management of the Endangered Ecological Community – Eastern Sydney Banksia Scrub community found within the lease area. Mawland intends to seek progress with this differentiation.

The other cultural landscape condition relates to the management/maintenance of the inscriptions in the lease area. The inscriptions received conservation in 2007-2008. There was ongoing research and investigation by archaeologists, historians and geologists as part of ARC Project 2013-15. Mawland attempted to commence repainting of the inscriptions in

2019 but was unable to obtain Heritage Council approval to carry out the works. Discussions continue to attempt to gain approval for works.

Tables 4.1 Performance of Cultural Headline Indicators

<u>Index Cultural Jan 2020 to Dec 2020</u>	
Aboriginal sites condition	1
Building condition	1
Cultural landscape condition	0.5
Infrastructure condition	1
Moveable heritage collection condition	1
Cultural index	0.92

4.2 Case Studies

Visitor Services

Visitors to Q Station continue to participate in a variety of experiences to learn more about the Q Station Story. The COVID19 pandemic of 2020 and resultant cessation of tour product for much of that year is commented on above.

Subject to the comments as to Covid19, Q Station’s tours operate every day of the year and offer both a history and ghost tour daily schedule as well as the possibility of groups booking private tours. These private groups are both in house corporate groups and visiting social groups, birthday party or other corporate groups who are not staying. Sadly, for most of 2020 these tours did not operate due to the pandemic, and when they did operate strict covid compliance was undertaken, which limited numbers of participants significantly.

Our history tours comprise the Quarantine Wander which is a 1-hour history tour running every day at 11am and a longer history tour on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, the Quarantine Station Story. Sadly, for most of 2020 these tours did not operate due to the pandemic, and when they did operate strict covid compliance was undertaken, which limited numbers of participants significantly.

We continue to offer a range of ghost tours to a variety of different audiences. Sadly, for most of 2020 these tours did not operate due to the pandemic, and when they did operate strict covid compliance was undertaken, which limited numbers of participants significantly.

Our range of team building activities includes Outbreak, Who Dun it and Quest. We also offer kayaking (through our continued relationship with Manly Kayaks), snorkel hire, and giant games hire. Sadly for most of 2020 these tours did not operate due to the pandemic , and when they did operate strict covid compliance was undertaken, which limited numbers of participants significantly.

Open Days

The planned Open Days for 2020 were disrupted by the COVID19 pandemic. Ultimately, they were replaced with an Open Site policy during the Les Sculptures Refusee Exhibition in Oct-Nov 2020 for this year only, with only external viewings of the site and free history tours of the wharf/hospital precinct being available. Bad weather and a site evacuation due to the hazard burn evacuation on Oct 17 affected public take up of the free tours available.

Open Days are becoming less popular as the public becomes familiar with the site being open to the public at all times.

5. SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

5.2 Summary Reporting on Headline Indicators

The condition of Quarantine Station's social environment is very healthy. The IMAMS suggest high levels of social responsibility and achievements in 2020, with an overall index score of 1 out of 1 .

Visitation patterns reflect forecasts; Customer's expectations are being met and feedback is good; Visitors recognise key site values and protocols and the operation has a positive profile among stakeholders and the local community. Our customers are discerning enough to have become bored with traditional ways to experience heritage sites and are prepared to pay for experiences that break stereotypes.

Mawland's key objective has been to provide unique accommodation of contemporary comfort while allowing and displaying recognisable heritage features in every area of our site whilst ensuring profitability. Extensive publicity and marketing of the site, highlighting sustainability, conservation, adaptive reuse and the cultural and the fascinating history of the site has led to QStation being seen as one of the emerging icons of Sydney tourism.

When special needs or disability are identified by a guest on booking, or noted by our staff on client check in, QStation takes action to ensure that the unique stay offered at QStation is just as exciting and comfortable for that person as our other guests.

Again in 2020, the weakest performing social area was visitor access and specifically attracting visitors to arrive and depart by water. The EcoHopper Service was cancelled during the pandemic and no restart date has as yet been determined.

Tables 5.1 Performance of Social Headline Indicators 2020

<u>Index Social Jan 2020 to Dec 2020</u>	
Customer complaints	1
Local employment	1
Media	1
Minimal Impact Code	1

Partnerships	1
Public complaints	1
Public perceptions	1
Representation of leisure target market	1
Research opportunities	1
Satisfaction of the target market	1
Staff and contractor training	1
Visitor access	1
Visitor numbers	1
Social index	1

5.2 CASE STUDIES

Social Media Engagement

Sales and Marketing Manager Natalie Dillon reports:

During the 2020 pandemic Facebook Live virtual history and ghost tours were filmed by staff and were extremely popular with remote viewers.

We have also focused on tagging accounts such as ‘Manly Australia’ so our posts drop into stories and feeds. Referrals from social media direct to the Q Station website has also increased by including links for events etc. in the bio of the Instagram page for example. Christmas Day and New Year’s Eve events sold out in record time in 2020 although the events were cancelled due to the COVID 19 pandemic. .

Guest feedback was very positive during 2020

Artist in Residence

Jo Neville is the QStation Artist in Residence and Interpretive Curator. Her role is to interpret the environment and culture of QStation artistically, to engage guests and particularly the students who visit us.

In 2020 Jo continued

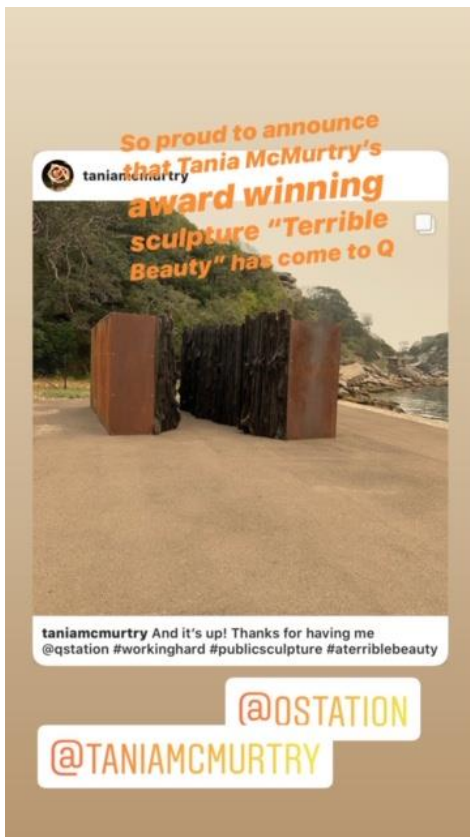
- Re-using foliage and vegetation on site for decoration in public spaces, after it has been trimmed by the Gardening Team during a seasonal maintenance trim.
- Creating artworks in some of the accommodation and public spaces made from repurposed papers sourced from Reverse Garbage,. These artworks will



be rotated as needed across the site, allowing multiple use of these decorations.

- Christmas 2020 sadly was significantly affected by the pandemic and 2019 decorations were re-used.
- We have been able to reuse and rotate decorations that were purpose made for annual onsite events and historic celebrations In 2020, these decorations are stored and catalogued for the purpose of multiple use.

“A Terrible Beauty” by Irish born Sydney Artist Tania McMurtry (Born in Belfast 1964, arrived in Australia 1981) *is* a large, immersive sculpture erected at QStation in late 2019, that encourages the viewer to interact with sight and smell simultaneously, allowing them a moment to journey through their memory. It is on temporary display at QStation. The charred blackness of the burnt wood is beautiful and fragile, in contrast to the strength of solid bolted steel. This contrast reflects McMurtry’s experience of The Troubles in Belfast - the terrible beauty of the dark landscape, burnt-out buses and bombed buildings. This large work reflects the passage taken by thousands of migrants throughout the Quarantine Station’s history to the safety of Australia, and their hopes and dreams for peace and happiness in the Australian landscape.

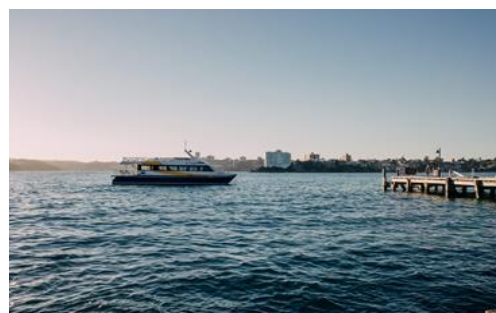


Les Sculptures Refusee 2020

Having long been a supporter of the arts, Q Station was thrilled to be the host venue of Les Sculptures Refusées, an outdoor sculpture exhibition modelled on The Archibald Prize’s Salon de Refuses, which exhibits works which missed out on the Archibald and has attracted a cult-like following of its own. The open-air exhibition is an exciting opportunity for the local community to experience creations by some of Australia’s best sculptors. After the resounding success of the exhibition in 2020, Q Station announced that the exhibition will be back in October/November 2021 with even more sculptures to admire on site.

Harbour Hopper

The Sydney Harbour Eco Hopper ferry usually stops at Quarantine Wharf (Q Station) multiple times a day, 7 days a week. With connections to Manly, Circular Quay, Darling Harbour, Taronga Zoo and Watsons Bay, the Eco Hopper is an enjoyable, relaxing way to see Sydney Harbour & arrive at QStation- and historically accurate arrival!



The Eco Hopper was discontinued in March 2020 due to the Pandemic and no date for its re-establishment has been announced.

Tours, Education and Visitor Services

Sadly for most of 2020 tours and experiences did not operate due to the pandemic, and when they did operate strict covid compliance was undertaken, which limited numbers of participants significantly.

At Q Station we believe that children learn by doing. The educational school excursions for Primary children are focused on an exploration of the Quarantine Station site.

Meaning-making for these primary students comes through interaction with the place of the Quarantine Station, exploring the natural and built environment, handling artefacts, following paths of migration on large maps, experiencing past technologies, interacting with primary sources, playing games and hearing stories.

All of Q Station's school excursion programs have significant links to the NSW and Australian National Curriculum across multiple subject areas, however these are also able to be customised to meet particular needs of the group.

Tertiary excursion education programs at Q Station provide engaging learning experiences in an ever-evolving historically and geographically significant context. We are experienced in delivering programs for different University faculties and also for ESL students. A tertiary excursion at Q Station gives you the opportunity to customise your own experience dependent on your students learning objectives. Waves of migration to Australia throughout its history, disease and the evolution of medical technology, or the way societal pressures and government policy have reflected differing experiences dependent on individuals class', gender and race are all themes that come sharply into focus in quarantine.

Exploration of the natural and built environment, handling artefacts, interacting with primary sources and hearing stories fosters empathy with the past and ongoing consideration of how the site has been valued by different constituencies throughout its history.

Q Station Sydney Harbour National Park offers a unique environment for Professional Development and is a significant resource for education across ages and subject areas.

The Teaching & Learning team at Q Station share a love of the site and a passion for education. With extensive teaching experience in a variety of settings and across the life span, the team brings significant knowledge and joyful commitment to their role as educators. With teachers, as with students, an inquiry-based, place-conscious approach is fostered and all of our professional development is designed to be a meaningful, authentic experience for the participants as on-going learners, as well as educators.

We are always open and interested in facilitating professional development whether

linked to the curriculum or in line with other interests and goals, such as art & writing retreats, experiential learning, historical skill intensives, team building, and more.



6. ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

6.1 Summary Reporting on Headline Indicators

Obviously with limited opening times and two lockdowns, QStation suffered financially in 2020. Most weddings and conferencing was cancelled throughout the year, few tours operated and school excursions were cancelled.

The overall economic index was 0.92 out of 1 . Full financial information is shared with NPWS on a confidential basis.

The weakest performing economic areas were occupancy levels, yield and profitability. Business performance is constrained by some Conditions of Approval, such as the limitation of numbers on site and limitation of tour operation hours.

Transport remains a vexed issue and very expensive to operate. The enormity and constraints of the site require all movements of people and equipment to be carefully planned (due to the environmental conditions of the Lease) and the weather impacts significantly on arrangements.

Mawland is still considering the imposition of a parking charge for use of the CP1 Car, equivalent to NPWS charges on North Head, to allow establishment of a fund to further bushland and environmental care.

Tables 6.1 Performance of Economic Headline Indicators 2020

<u>Index Economic Jan 2020 to Dec 2020</u>	
Customer database	1
Customer feedback systems	1
DEC Quarantine Station partnership	1
Marketing performance	1
Occupancy levels	0.9
Profitability	0.714286
Rate	1
Repeat visitors	1
Staff retention	1
Yield	0.8
Economic index	0.92

6.2 Case Studies

Staffing and Employment/ Women on Staff

We have 104 staff at Q Station. We have a majority female workforce, with 55 females compared to 49 males employed

This is broken down into:

- 71 = Casual
- 1 = Part Time
- 32 = Full Time

Our staff hold passports in the following countries;

Country	No. Staff
Australia	85
Brazil	4
New Zealand	3
Portugal	3
United Kingdom	2
India	2
Republic of Korea	1
Germany	1
Jordan	1
China	1
Canada	1

Recruitment in 2020 in the Hospitality industry was particularly difficult. There is a skill/labour shortage, with difficulty in recruiting for a number of roles – but specifically chefs, cooks and front-line staff.

For example we are currently advertising for F&B Attendants, our previous advertisement in March only received 33 applicants, compared to a similar time in 2019 which received 124.

This article outlines the issues/concerns we have been facing as a business:

<https://www.brewsnews.com.au/2021/03/03/the-real-challenge-of-recruitment-post-covid/> - however summarised:

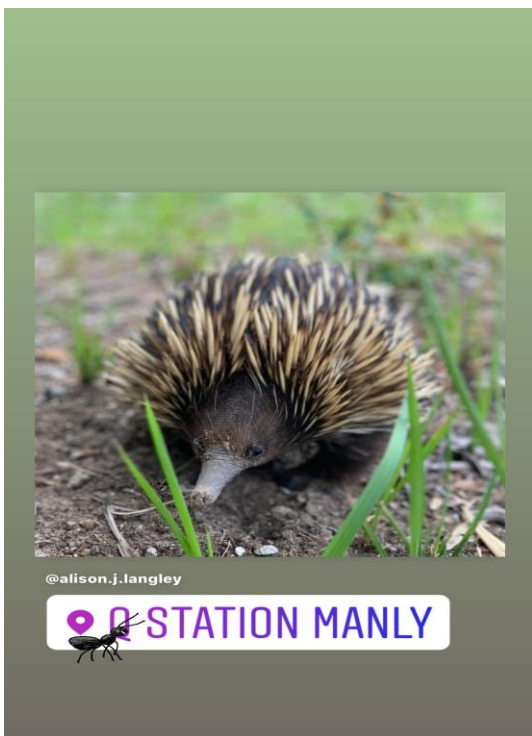
“A combination of high demand across the hospitality industry, a reduction in people on working holiday visas who would typically be attracted to these roles, and the impact of Job Keeper on candidate sentiment, has meant an immediate shortage of staff across the hospitality industry in general.”

Staff Training 2020 has included;

- Tools for New Supervisors – 8 Week program by Accor Training. Attendees; Restaurant and Bar Supervisor, C&E Supervisor, C&E Operations Manager
- Train the Trainer Session (Inductions). Attendees; Outlets Manager and C&E Operations Manager
- Train the Trainer Session (Covid and Sustainability). Attendees; Outlets Manager and C&E Operations Manager
- E-Hotelier online learning program for Middle Managers & Supervisors
- Fire Panel and Evacuation Training

- COVIDSAFE Training for all staff
- First Aid training for all managers and senior staff to ensure first aider presence on site in all shifts.

With a business centred on exceeding guest expectations and providing an exceptional guest experience Q Station places a strong focus on training & development. There is a commitment from the onset that all new Team Members receive a minimum 1hr induction with the Human Resources Manager followed by an ongoing role induction specific to their new department. There are also various roles on site which require specialty qualifications and certifications. Q Station is committed to providing and maintaining Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA), First Aid, Working with Children Checks & Food Safety Supervisor certifications where applicable. Team Members also have access to continual development opportunities via our industry training partner eHotelier (a cloud based learning application), via affiliation with the Accor hotel chain and its Academy program and via internal training and third-party consultants.



Guest Experience and Feedback

The commitment, passion and professional approach Q Station Team Members display on a daily basis is reflected in the positive feedback regularly received.

Fabulous views with fascinating history

"We had three nights at the old quarantine station (Q station) on the shores of Sydney harbour, within the North Head National Park. This place operated as a quarantine station from 1828 to 1984. That's a long time and a lot of history, and the tours and the buildings are just fabulous to experience. The staff are really friendly and helpful, our deluxe Queen harbour view room was very comfortable, with a stunning view across the harbour to Balmoral beach. The fast ferry operates from the Q between 10 and 4- the wharf being alongside the visitor centre, which houses a museum and cafe. There is a lovely sandy harbour beach, and you can walk until you drop if you wish. We dined in the Boiler Room restaurant, enjoying a really good meal, served by friendly and attentive staff. The Q is a must do for everyone."

7. QUARANTINE STATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We are privileged to have community input into interpretation and public use of the site through our Community Committee which meets during the year to discuss ways in which the local and state community can access and receive education about the quarantine station. This group considers natural heritage, built heritage, indigenous relevance and interpretation of the past.

Report from Chair of QSCCC – Sandy Hoy

Background

A permanent Quarantine Station was established at North Head in Manly in 1838 to quarantine people arriving in Sydney by ship to prevent the spread of disease to the colony. The Quarantine Station ceased operation in 1984, after which its management was transferred to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The 27-hectare site comprises numerous historic buildings and roads, with a stunning backdrop of the native vegetation of Sydney Harbour National Park at the entrance to Sydney Harbour.

The NSW Minister for the Environment and Mawland Quarantine Station Pty Ltd (Mawland) signed a lease on 26 October 2006 for the North Head Quarantine Station Conservation and Adaptive Reuse Project. Mawland and the NSW Minister for the Environment/NPWS are co-proponents of the project to adapt the Quarantine Station site for cultural tourism purposes under a 21-year planning approval expiring in 2027, with further options for renewal.

Q Station, as it is now known, has been operating since 2008 consistent with its approved uses for accommodation, conferences and functions, restaurant, visitor centre with a museum and cafe, environmental and cultural study centre, and guided tours. Open Days for the public are regularly held. Informal access to the site by the public is encouraged.

The Conditions of Planning Approval (CoPA) require that a Quarantine Station Community Consultative Committee be established for the term of the project. 64 meetings of the QSCCC were held until November 2018 when a process for inviting expressions of interest for nomination of members for a new QSCCC for a four-year term was undertaken by NPWS in late 2018-early 2019.

Sandy Hoy was appointed by the then Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) as the Independent Chairperson of the QSCCC on 27 February 2019.

QSCCC members were selected from the nominations by the independent chairperson according to the criteria set out in the Quarantine Station Community Consultative Committee Terms of Reference, Conditions of Planning Approval (CoPA), and the DPE Guidelines for Community Consultative Committees for State Significant Developments (January 2019).

Several current QSCCC members were members of the previous committee, including the former chairperson Cathy Griffin. Their knowledge and continuity of connection to Q Station has greatly benefited the current QSCCC.

Members selected for the QSCCC signed a code of conduct and submitted a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

Membership and attendance

The QSCCC is chaired by Independent Chairperson Sandy Hoy, and comprises the following members:

Organisation / interest	Name	May 2020	Meetings attended		
			August 2020	November 2020	February 2021
Community representatives	Cathy Griffin		✓	✓	✓
	Adele Heasman		✓	✓	✓
	Virginia Macleod		✓	apology	✓
	Doug Sewell	Meeting not held because Q Station was closed due to COVID-19	✓	✓	✓
	Jennifer Wilson		✓	✓	✓
Northern Beaches Council (elected representative)	Cr Candy Bingham		✓	✓	✓
NPWS (co-proponent)	Chad Weston		✓	✓	apology
	Jessica Dargan		✓	✓	✓
Mawland (co-proponent)	Max Player	✓	✓	✓	
	Suzanne Stanton	✓	✓	✓	
Independent Chairperson	Sandy Hoy		✓	✓	✓

There were no resignations from the QSCCC in 2020-21. Attendance at the quarterly meetings is consistently high, reflecting the interest and commitment of the QSCCC members. Occasional apologies are received mainly due to unavoidable prior commitments. The QSCCC sets meeting dates 12 months in advance to avoid potential diary conflicts.

There is good rapport among all QSCCC members who understand the site, the issues and their roles well. Co-proponents NPWS and Mawland are co-operative and responsive to questions, feedback and issues raised by community members.

The community members of the QSCCC have a valuable contribution as a “sounding board” for NPWS and Mawland, providing advice and feedback to NPWS and Mawland from the various perspectives of community member, local resident, site visitor, activity participant, and overnight guest. The community members also act as a conduit between NPWS and Mawland and local community groups, Northern Beaches Council, and the State Member of Parliament for Manly.

Feedback from community members about the QSCCC meetings includes that the committee is working well with good working relationships. Meetings are considered to be well run with detailed minutes provided.

All co-proponents and committee members have their own fields of interest/responsibility and strongly-held views. Issues are discussed and any disagreements are resolved amicably in a positive, supportive way and in the best interests of the site.

As of March 2021 there are two vacant positions on the QSCCC. NPWS intends to advertise for Expressions of Interest for nominations to fill the vacancies.

Activities of the QSCCC over the past 12 months

The QSCCC operates according to the Department of Planning and Environment’s Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects 2019, and the CoPA. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has advised that the CoPA for QSCCC take precedence over any inconsistency with the DPE CCC Guidelines.

The scheduled 13 May 2020 meeting was not held because Q Station was closed due to COVID-19. The meeting on 19 August 2020 was held online via Zoom due to public gathering and social distancing restrictions. Meetings were held at the Quarantine Station, 1 North Head Scenic Drive at Manly, on 18 November 2020 and 10 February 2021.

Minutes are prepared after each meeting and are approved by the committee members at the following meeting with amendments if required. Following approval of the minutes a summary of the meeting minutes is placed by NPWS and Mawland on their respective websites:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NPWS/AdvisoryCommittees.htm> and

<https://www.qstation.com.au/our-story.html>

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, activities that QSCCC members participated in at Q Station during the year were limited to:

- the opening of *Les Sculptures Refusees* on Thursday 15 October 2020. The sculptures were on display at Q Station until 15 November.
- meeting with the Friends of Quarantine Station on Sunday 7 February 2021.

There were no joint meetings with any other CCCs.

Key Issues

Key events which had a significant operational and financial impact on Q Station in 2020-21 were:

- closure of Q Station from 8 April to mid June due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Gates were closed with security on site.
- hotel operations resumed from Friday to Sunday only from mid June to mid August, with the site open to the public until sunset for walking, cycling etc. Security was on site at all times.
- in mid August hotel operations reopened 7 days a week, and the site was open to the public until sunset for walking, cycling etc.
- a hazard reduction burn at North Head resulted in hotel operations needing to close and evacuation of visitors and staff at Q Station on 17-18 October 2020.
- closure of Q Station between 21 December 2020 and 5 January 2021 (including Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Eve) due to the COVID-19 Northern Beaches lockdown. Gates were closed with security on site.

Planned events and activities at Q Station in 2020 often needed to be changed or cancelled at short notice. It is understood that even while Q Station was open in 2020 they were often not busy.

Closure of Q Station in mid 2020 coincided with media exposure of the site through pre-recorded television specials airing on the ABC and Channels 9 and 10.

Compliance with the CoPA in relation to Community Open Days was particularly difficult in 2020 due to COVID-19. Community Open Days were not able to be held in their usual form on-site in 2020 due to closure of Q Station and social distancing and public gathering restrictions. Mawland organised free public tours of *Les Sculptures Refusees* on weekends in October-November 2020 in lieu of an Open Day. Advice from DPIE of acceptable options for Open Days if public gathering restrictions occur again would clarify this situation.

It is understood that visitation, occupancy and normal operations at Q Station are slowly improving in early 2021 with the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions.

Discussions were also held during QSCCC meetings about early exercise of the option to renew the lease of Quarantine Station before 2026-2027.

Meeting reports

NPWS provided a report at each meeting on:

- North Head Precinct Planning
- Walking tracks
- Environmental audits and monitoring
- Vegetation and weed management
- Wildlife management – penguins, long-nosed bandicoots, echidnas, small mammals
- Pest management – rabbits, foxes
- Fire planning and management – hazard reduction, fire plans, vegetation management.

Mawland provided a report for discussion at each meeting covering topics including:

- day-to-day operations
- visitation
- activities such as tours, events, and Open Days
- education programs and support for local schools
- activation of buildings and spaces with compatible activities
- support for artists and sculptors through providing a venue for their work
- site maintenance
- building refurbishments and other works
- response to weather, fire and other events which impact on the site
- media coverage
- participation in research projects.

In addition to discussing the above issues, members of the Committee have raised issues and suggestions such as:

- cataloguing a collection of Quarantine Station documents
- improving the safety of people using the funicular stairs.
- feedback on their experience as a guest or visitor at Q Station.

Focus for the next 12 months

Quarterly meetings are planned to continue in 2021-22.

The planned activities of the QSCCC for 2021-22 will be guided by COVID-19, the contributions and interest of the QSCCC members, and ongoing and arising management issues raised by NPWS and Mawland. Such activities will include:

- providing feedback and support for the ongoing activation of and increasing visitation to Q Station
- closer involvement in the review of site-wide management plans and environmental monitoring and audit reports to provide informed feedback and recommendations to the co-proponents
- continuing to liaise with community and interest groups and with Northern Beaches Council on Quarantine Station related matters.

8. DPIE STATEMENT ON COMPLIANCE WITH DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

The Quarantine Station redevelopment has an extensive and complex development approval involving 233 conditions. Some of these conditions establish further approval processes for site-wide plans and detailed construction proposals. Other conditions specify the nature of visitor activities permissible on the site, whilst a further suite of conditions is focused on the monitoring and public reporting of environmental performance, compliance with approvals and visitor impacts.

DPIE continued compliance monitoring during 2020. There were no compliance inquiries during this period.

9. SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS

The IMAMS reports for this period recommend a number of adaptive management responses to the poor performing indicators. Table 11.1 presents some of the more significant recommendations and their implementation status. These recommendations are based on the thrust of the IMAMS recommendations and additional context from the case studies.

Table 11.1 Significant IMAMS recommendations and their implementation status.

Key recommendation	Implementation status
NPWS to work with Little Penguin recovery team to identify appropriate management responses to population declines.	Ongoing
NPWS to continuing 3-weekly rabbit control and has participated in the RHDV release coordinated by Local Land Services.	Ongoing
Undertake repainting of the inscriptions.	Potential repainting of 9% of suite inscriptions, subject to receipt of Heritage approval and professor/ student availability
Continue Monitoring of customer comments and in particular of the reasons given for conferences tendered for, which occur elsewhere.	Ongoing monitoring
Upgrade products and packages by adding new add-ons eg bonding and art activities, whale watching and indigenous tour availability.	Ongoing
Continued attempts to encourage guests to rely less on shuttle buses on site	Ongoing