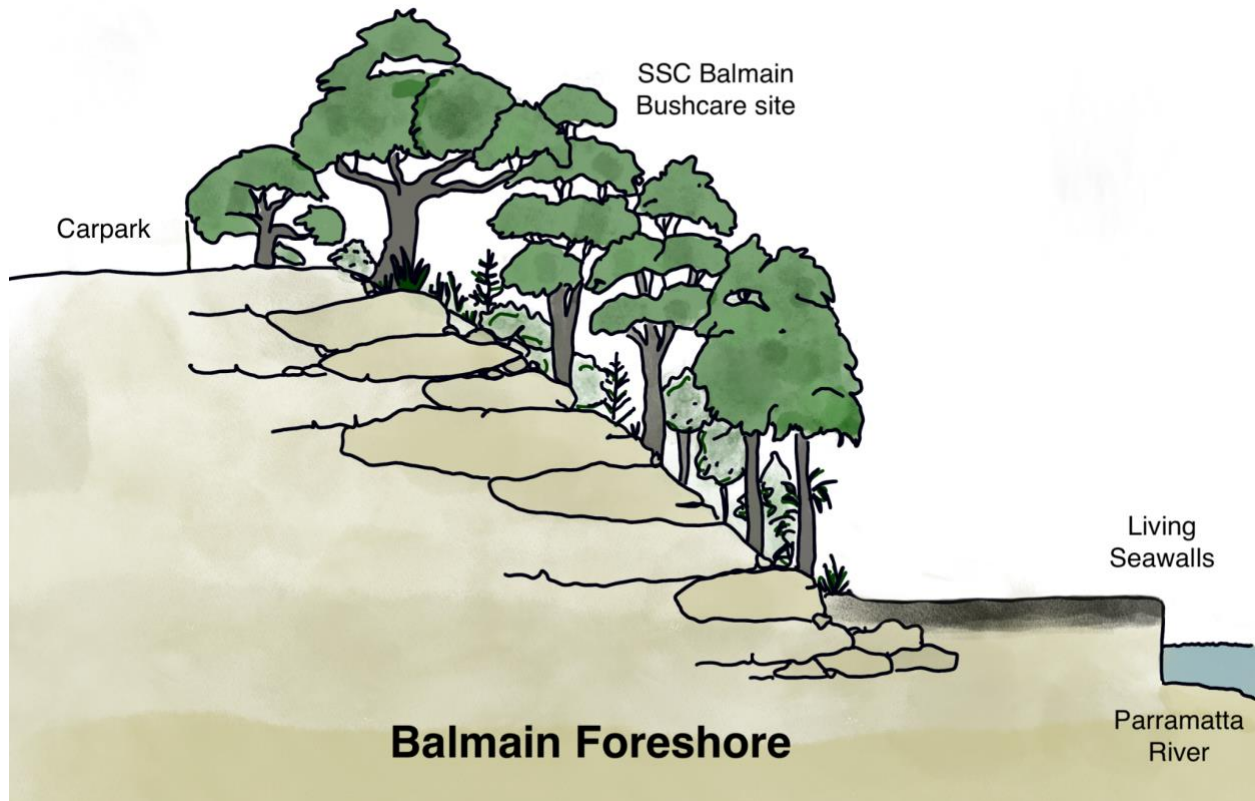




# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Balmain Bush care Introduction



### Sydney Sandstone Woodland

The remnant patch of Sydney Sandstone Woodland on the property of Sydney Secondary College Balmain campus is a habitat stepping stone between bush remnants at Elkington Park and Callan Park.

Sydney Sandstone woodland or forest is found within the Sydney basin, often on ridges or slopes of sandstone outcrops. The soil is generally sandy and derived from the sandstone bedrock. It is by a mix of eucalypt trees, such as the Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*) and various species of *Banksia*, *Grevillea*, and *Acacia*. The understory includes shrubs like wattles (*Acacia* spp.) and ground cover species such as *Lomandra* and various grasses. It is home to a diverse range of plant species adapted to the nutrient-poor, sandy soils. Sydney sandstone woodlands support a variety of animal species including birds (e.g., the Eastern Whip-poor-will and the Superb Fairy-wren), reptiles (e.g., skinks and dragons), and mammals (e.g., the Common Ringtail Possum). It also provides habitat for many insects and other invertebrates.



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## **Trees**

Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata*, Red Bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera*, Port Jackson Fig *Ficus rubiginosa*, and Coast Banksia *Banksia integrifolia*,

## **Shrub layer**

Dense thickets of Kunze *ambigua* and Sydney Golden Wattle *Acacia longifolia* with added colour from Grevilleas, pea flowers and smaller wattles like Sweet Wattle *Acacia suaveans*.

## **Climbers**

*Hardenbergia violacea* provide a vivid display in spring.

## **Ground covers**

A diverse mix of soft grasses like *Microlaena stipoides*, tough spiky *Lomandra longifolia*, lilies like *Dianella caerulea* with its large blueberries, and ground cover like *Commelina cyanide*.

## **Bushcare restoration and conservation**

Sydney Sandstone Woodland/Forest is a distinctive and ecologically valuable community that requires ongoing conservation efforts to ensure its preservation and resilience. Urban development, land clearing, and invasive species pose significant threats to this ecosystem. Fragmentation of habitat due to urban sprawl also impacts its ecological integrity.

**Weed Control - Invasive Species Management:** Balmain Bush care focuses on removing invasive plant species that threaten the native vegetation. They employ methods such as hand-weeding, herbicide application, and monitoring to prevent the spread of invasive species and protect the integrity of the native plant community.

**Planting Native Species - Replanting Efforts:** The group organises planting days to reintroduce native species that are characteristic of Sydney Sandstone Woodland. They select plant species that are ecologically appropriate for the site, ensuring that the new plants support the local biodiversity and contribute to habitat restoration.

**Erosion Control - Soil Stabilisation:** To address soil erosion issues, Balmain Bush care implements erosion control measures such as planting groundcovers and installing erosion barriers. These practices help stabilise the soil, reduce sediment runoff, and maintain the health of the ecosystem.

**Habitat Enhancement - Creating Wildlife Habitats:** The group works on enhancing habitat features that support local wildlife. This includes installing bird boxes, creating brush piles, and managing vegetation to provide shelter and food resources for native animals.



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## How do the bush care groups know what to plant?

Local patches of natural landscape such as Kellys Bush across the water at Hunters Hill and Berry Island provide clues.

## Project Introduction



The Balmain Foreshore Project launched in 2022, and involved an investigation of a site on school property and an exploration of opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the site.

<https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/balmain-foreshore-project/home>

## Project site



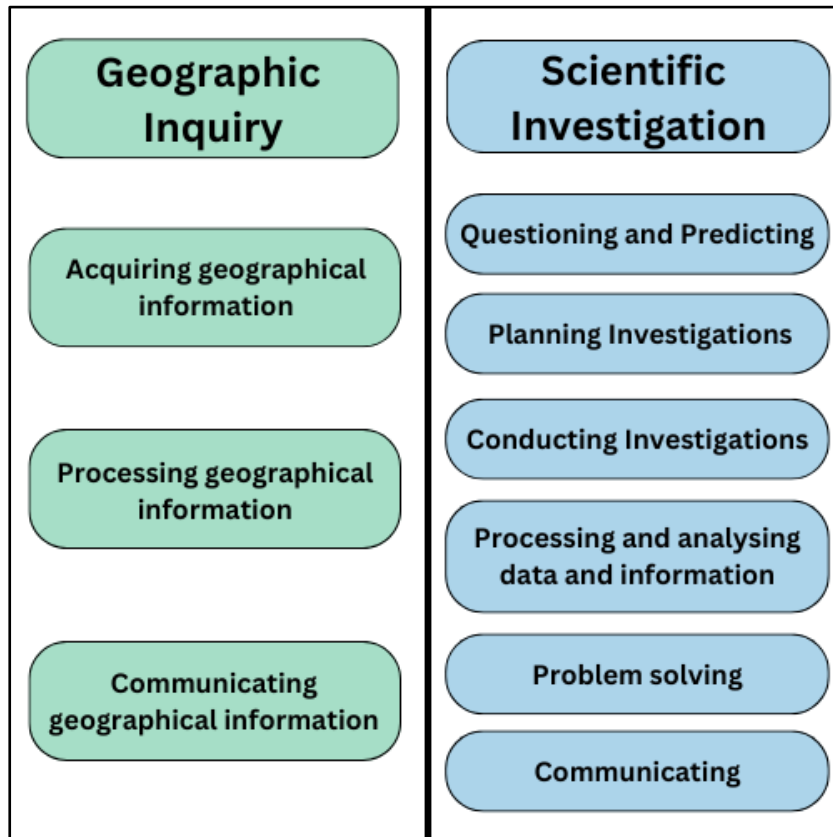


# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Project investigation

The Balmain Foreshore Project allows students to undertake a set of tests, and fieldwork activities which address investigation and inquiry skills requirements in both Geography and Science.



## Developing questions for an investigation

When you begin a scientific investigation or geographical inquiry it is important to have a series of questions to guide your actions.

Based on the activities that have taken place over the last couple of years some obvious questions for investigation are:

- What types of habitats are present in the Balmain Foreshore area and on the sandstone slope?
- What are the environmental conditions in different parts of the foreshore and slope?



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

- How does the project enhance local biodiversity along the foreshore?
- What are the historical uses of the foreshore area, and other areas of the harbour?
- Does the project impact local terrestrial wildlife and marine life?

Some other questions we could consider are:

- Does the project impact the cultural heritage and historical significance of the foreshore area?
- What methods are being used to manage stormwater runoff and prevent erosion in the area?
- How does the project address climate change and rising sea levels?
- What role does community engagement play in the planning and implementation of the project?
- What are the anticipated social and economic impacts of the Balmain Foreshore Project on the local community?
- How are traditional Aboriginal land management practices being incorporated into the project?
- How does the project incorporate principles of ecological restoration?

## Can you think of other questions for investigation?

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## Design your investigation

In groups of 3-4, decide on a topic to investigate about the SSC Balmain Bush care site, and then determine how you can investigate this topic. Ensure that your topic is something that can be examined in 1-2 classes.



# Balmain Foreshore Project

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People in your group:

Investigation topic:

Inquiry question:

Describe how you will find out about your chosen topic:

What equipment do you need?

What data/evidence will you collect?

Write a plan of investigation:

How will you communicate your findings with the class?

## Opportunities and ideas for fieldwork in the SSC Balmain Bush care site

### Vegetation Survey and Monitoring

<b>Objective</b>	Assess changes in plant species composition, abundance, and health.
<b>Activity</b>	Conduct a vegetation survey using quadrats. Establish multiple quadrats of fixed size (e.g., 10m x 10m) throughout the woodland. Record the presence, abundance, and condition of native and invasive plant species within these quadrats.
<b>Equipment</b>	Quadrat frames, plant identification guides, data sheets, GPS device.

### Weed monitoring and Control

<b>Objective</b>	Evaluate the success of invasive species management strategies.
<b>Activity</b>	Map areas where weed control efforts have been implemented. Record the types and densities of invasive species before and after control measures. Compare these findings to assess the effectiveness of weed management practices.
<b>Equipment</b>	GPS device, maps, data sheets, weed identification guides.

### Soil erosion and stabilisation assessment

<b>Objective</b>	Evaluate the effectiveness of erosion control measures.
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# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

<b>Activity</b>	Inspect areas where erosion control measures have been applied. Measure soil stability using erosion pins or similar methods. Assess the effectiveness of groundcovers and erosion barriers by comparing erosion rates before and after intervention.
<b>Equipment</b>	Erosion pins, measuring tools, soil stability assessment sheets.

## Wildlife Habitat Assessment

<b>Objective</b>	Assess the success of habitat enhancement efforts.
<b>Activity</b>	Conduct a survey to identify and document wildlife activity in the area. Look for evidence of use of installed bird boxes, brush piles, and other habitat features. Record sightings of key species and signs of habitat utilisation.
<b>Equipment</b>	Binoculars, camera traps, data sheets, wildlife identification guides.

## Biodiversity Monitoring

<b>Objective</b>	Measure changes in overall biodiversity and species richness.
<b>Activity</b>	Perform regular biodiversity surveys by recording the presence of various plant, insect, and animal species. Use a combination of visual surveys and traps (e.g., pitfall traps for insects) to gather comprehensive data.
<b>Equipment</b>	Field guides, traps, data sheets.

## Bushcare comparative Analysis

<b>Objective</b>	Use nearby reference sites to evaluate the effectiveness of restoration efforts.
<b>Activity</b>	Compare the current conditions at the Balmain Campus woodland with those at reference sites such as Kellys Bush and Berry Island. Assess differences in plant and animal diversity, habitat quality, and overall ecosystem health.
<b>Equipment</b>	Comparison data, reference site records, field equipment.



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Bushcare Field work

### Location

Examine the two Google Maps images below. One is an aerial view of our Balmain Foreshore Project Field site close up. The second is a map of our site showing its location in a broader context including Parramatta River and Sydney Harbour.

Right: Image 1 - Large scale aerial view of Balmain Foreshore Project site.

Image 2 - Small scale map of Balmain Foreshore Project site.

Refer to the images below and describe its location in relation to its surrounding areas, local waterways and suburbs.

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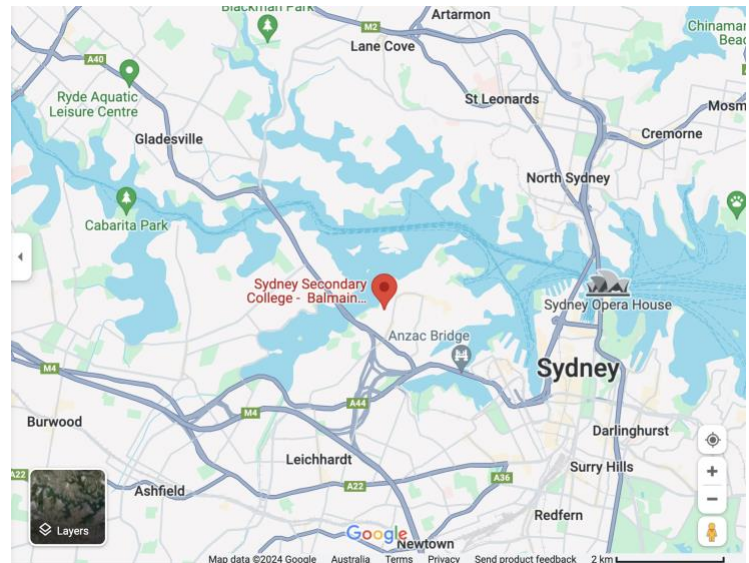
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# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Site 1: Sydney Secondary College, Balmain - Bushcare site

The SSC Balmain bushcare site, situated on the waterfront at the mouth of Iron Cove is on the property of the school and is Sydney Sandstone Woodland and Forest. Originally, this site had a narrow sandy beach, and large sandstone boulders with oysters. Shore birds frequented the site. There was a steep hill with a variety of colourful bush plants. Despite the steepness of the slope the natural bushland and sandstone would have naturally regulated, filtered and held back flow of water from nearby areas.

Features of Sydney Sandstone forests and woodlands sites:

- Soils derived from Hawkesbury Sandstone - shallow, poor, sandy.
- Diversity of plants adapted to low nutrients, dry winds and frequent fires.
- Woodlands and forests were originally unintentionally conserved due to unsuitability for agriculture, but are threatened by suburban developments.
- Topography affects soil moisture and fertility - well-drained steep slopes, moist gentle slopes, west and east facing slopes affected by drying, deep soils accumulate down slope, fertile soils accumulate at the bottom of slopes

The original sandstone cliffs and rock shelves were greatly disturbed, first by use as a boat-building site, then in building the school in the 1970s. A seawall was built to hold back the sea and regulate the flow of water. Low-lying areas were filled and levelled using dumped soil and rubbish. The hillside bush was buried. Stormwater from nearby areas containing additional nutrients ran off the site more easily and weeds became established on the site.

This bushcare site has been maintained by community volunteers since the 2000s, and the area below Sydney Secondary College, Balmain Campus is a remnant patch of bushland on the Balmain Peninsula, providing a habitat corridor for native species. The group meets each 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month, 9am to 12:30pm, at school carpark, end of Longview Street, off Bayville Street. Students are encouraged to contribute to this bushcare effort.

As a result of the bushcare group, tall eucalypts and an understorey of shrubs and grasses are appreciated by the community who use the wooden walkway, provided by Inner West Council, to walk from waterfront to Balmain and Rozelle streets.





# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Fieldwork - Bird diversity

Your first focus for this visit will be birds. You will need to sit on the ground very quietly for about 5-10 minutes and observe the birds that you see. If you make noise, or move around you will most likely scare the birds away. Use the Photo Guide, and tally your observations over the next couple of pages to record your observations. Keep a tally next to the name of the birds.

### Honeyeaters

### Monochromes

Scarlet Honeyeaters		Australian Raven	
New Holland Honeyeater		Magpie-Lark	
Eastern Spinebill		Pied Currawong	
Noisy Miner		Willie Wag Tail	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater		Australian Magpie	
Bell Miner		Pacific Koel	
White-plumed Honeyeater		Grey Butcherbird	
Red Wattlebird		Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	

### Parrots

### Raptors

Red-Rumped PARrot		Black-shouldered Kite	
Eastern Rosella		Collared Sparrowhawk	
Galah		Peregrine Falcon	
Rainbow Lorikeet		Whistling Kite	
Sulphur Crested Cockatoo		Little Eagle	
Musk Lorikeet		Nankeen Kestrel	
Little Corella		Brown Goshawk	
		Pacific Baza	
		Square-tailed Kite	
		Wedge-tailed Eagle	

### Bush birds

Red-browed Finch		White-browed Scrubwren	
Grey Fantail		Spotted Pardalote	



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

Grey Shrike-thrush		Golden Whistler	
Eastern Yellow Robin		Fan-tailed Cuckoo	
Superb Fairy Wren		Silvereeye	
Yellow Thornbill		Mistletoebird	
Rufous Whistler		Crested Shrike-tit	
Olive-backed Oriole		Sacred and Azure Kingfishers	

## Water bird

Pacific Black Duck		Chestnut and Grey Teal	
Purple Swamphen		Eurasian Coot	
Great and Little Cormorants		White-faced Heron	
Australian Reed Warbler		Australian Pelican	
Australian Wood Duck		Hardhead	
Dusky Moorhen		Australian Grebe	
Little Pied Cormorant		Eastern Great Egret	
Black Swan		Australian White Ibis	

## Nocturnal Birds

Tawny Frogmouth		Southern Boobook	
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## Non-native

## Introduced "pests"

Spotted Dove		Rock Dove	
Common Blackbird		Common Myna	
House Sparro			
Common Starling			
Red-whiskered Bulbul			

## Fieldwork - Plant diversity

Use your phones to record the variety of species that you can see in the Callan Park bushcare site. Upload these to the Balmain Foreshore Project Google Drive Fieldwork Photos - Callan Park folder. We will examine these photos in another lesson.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11HVBhArlx5Tir2wqRStW4FpEpJGcK5oq?usp=sharing>



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Fieldwork: Specific plant study

Specific plant studies are useful if you want to examine:

- Similarities and differences between plants
- adaptations to fire, drought, and insect attack
- The way plants disperse their seeds, reduce transpiration, or survive dry conditions

Choose three plant and fill out the details below (include a drawing or description):

	Plant 1	Plant 2	Plant 3
Tree shape (drawing)			
Tree Height			
Trunk circumference			
Flower - shape and colour			
Leaf - shape and colour (drawing and description)			
Bark - texture and colour (description)			
Seed pod on tree or ground (drawing)			



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Fieldwork: Environmental perception

Examine the site and fill in the table below. What are your feelings about this location? This activity aims to get some qualitative data from our visit. Qualitative means data that can't be quantified or counted easily. In this case it is to do with your feelings – it is difficult to measure with numbers and there is no absolute, correct answer. In the table below put a cross in the box which you think best indicates your feelings.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Ugly						Beautiful
Dirty						Clean
Unhealthy						Healthy
Monoculture						Biodiverse
Smelly						Fresh
Poor						Rich
Noisy						Quiet
Dark						Light
Hostile						Friendly
Tense						Relaxed

## Field work: Abiotic factors

A number of tests will be conducted to explore the abiotic features on the bushcare site. We will be using some specialised equipment and the tests will provide us with quantitative data (it can be measured with numbers, and provides us with exact results).

Physical Tests	Air Temperature (1m above ground)	Soil Temperature (10cm above ground)	Humidity (1 m above ground)	Light Intensity (1 m above ground)	Wind speed and direction
Site 1 (near carpark)					
Site 2 (mid-slope)					
Site 3 (foreshore/grass)					





# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

Soil	Parent Material	Soil Texture (sand/loam/clay)	Soil moisture (dry/moist/saturated)	Soil colour	Leaf litter depth
Site 1 (near car park)					
Site 2 (mid-slope)					
Site 3 (foreshore/grass)					

## Field work: Field Sketch

In the space below complete a field sketch of the bushcare site.

### How to draw a field sketch:

- Divide the space into three sections: foreground, middle ground and background.
- Draw the items you can see in the foreground, and add detail that you think is relevant.
- Next, draw what you can see in the middle ground.
- Then, draw what you can see in the background.
- Label the main features. In this case you are going to label features of the biotic and abiotic features of the environment.



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Site 2: Callan Park - Bushcare site

Students referred to community brochures about Callan Park.

### Fieldwork - Bird diversity

Your first focus for this visit will be birds. You will need to sit on the ground very quietly for about 5-10 minutes and observe the birds that you see. If you make noise, or move around you will most likely scare the birds away. Use the Photo Guide, and tally your observations over the next couple of pages to record your observations. Keep a tally next to the name of the birds.

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# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## Documentary making

Summarise and present the findings from the Balmain Foreshore Project through a creative short documentary or news segment. This task will allow students to showcase their understanding of the Sydney Secondary College Balmain Campus bushcare site and the Callan Park bushcare site, the environmental tests and fieldwork conducted, and the significance of your findings.

You will be filming a short documentary or news item in your group. It should be approximately 5 minutes in length.

Decide whether your team will create a documentary or a news segment. Documentaries generally include a narrative and interviews, while news segments focus on delivering information in a concise, engaging manner.

Develop a script or outline for your video.

Film various aspects of your project. You can also access the folders of photos from the excursions to use in your video.

This can include:

- Interviews with team members discussing their experiences and findings.
- Clips from your fieldwork at the bushcare sites.
- Close-ups of identified plants, birds, and mangroves.
- Shots of the school grounds and Callan Park to provide context.

Edit the footage and add captions, labels and graphics.

Your video should include:

- Overview of the Balmain Foreshore Project
- Fieldwork Highlights - Footage and explanations of environmental testing, bird diversity surveys, and plant identification at both sites.
- Discussion of a coherent topic or theme related to the project.

Ideas for topics for your documentary or news item:

- Biodiversity of Callan Park and/or Sydney Secondary College Balmain Bushcare
- Bushcare - Environmental Challenges and Solutions
- The Impact of Urbanization on Local Ecosystems and wildlife
- Plant Profiles and Identification - significant plant species found at the bushcare sites
- Bird Diversity and Conservation



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

- Restoration Efforts and Future Plans
- Comparing Ecosystems: Sydney Secondary College vs. Callan Park
- The Importance of Bushcare in Urban Areas
- The Future of the Balmain Foreshore Project

## Debate

*Urbanisation is a threat to sustainable biomes. Should there be limitations on urban land uses on the Iron Cove foreshore to prioritise environmental conservation?*

Students will research, summarise, and engage in a debate that aims to sharpen their critical thinking and communication skills while also encouraging them to delve into complex issues and consider multiple perspectives.

The debate on whether there should be limitations on personal and commercial use of Sydney Harbour to prioritise environmental conservation presents a compelling conundrum. On one hand, the **economic benefits** and **recreational opportunities** afforded by activities on the Harbour are undeniable. On the other hand, the **delicate marine ecosystems** and **natural beauty** of the Harbour are at risk from human impact.

By exploring this question through debate, students have the opportunity to engage in thoughtful analysis, weigh the pros and cons, and develop well-reasoned arguments. They can delve into the complexities of **resource management**, **sustainability**, and the **ethical considerations** inherent in balancing human needs with environmental protection.

The debate will run:

### Introduction

Students split into two groups.

**Team A (Residents' Perspective)**

**Team B (Environmentalists/Conservationists' Perspective)**

### Research & organisation (15 minutes)

Each group has 15 minutes to research and organise their groups in terms of speakers and writers.

### Opening Statements

Each team presents their pre-written opening statement (1-2mins) outlining their teams main points of view.



# Balmain Foreshore Project

A cross-curriculum education program to extend and engage students.

## **Rebuttal**

### **Both teams have 5 minutes to collect their thoughts**

4 members of **Team A** respond to **Team B's** opening arguments and reinforces their position

4 members of **Team B** counters **Team A's** points and strengthens their stance

## **Closing Statements**

### **Both teams have 5 minutes to collect their thoughts**

2 members of **Team B** reinforces their stance and concludes with a strong closing statement

2 members of **Team A** summarises their key points and makes a final appeal to the judges

## **Judging and Conclusion**

Judges (teachers) evaluate the debate teams based on arguments, rebuttals, and overall presentation

Winners announced and debate concluded.

## **Judging and Conclusion**

Judges (teachers or selected students) evaluate the debate teams based on arguments, rebuttals, and overall presentation