



EVALUATION FEEDBACK: number of response sheets returned = 115

The GCA Biennial Convention and AGM 2023 hosted by Toronto & Districts Garden Club Inc. was held in Lake Macquarie NSW, 10-15 September 2023.

Evaluation sheets were distributed at the Farewell lunch on Friday that was attended by 165 people. Response rate was 70% or 115 evaluation sheets returned.

Overall, 82% of participants were happy, 10% neutral and only less than 2% were unhappy. Some events were not applicable to all people and so there was a 5.7% sample with no response.

There were also some suggestions that will be valuable for the next hosts and GCA.

Convention Attendance

Registration was 163 people.

In addition, 152 single day registrants also attended (locals or those within driving distance).

A total of 315 people attended across the 6-day program.

Convention Program

The program covered 6 days. Events included Registration Day at Warners Bay Theatre, Welcome Reception at Multi-Arts Pavilion Speers Point, 3 days of gardening related field trips by coach, a lake cruise, GCA AGM and Luncheon at Club Macquarie, double feature movie night at Warners Bay Theatre, speakers' morning and Farewell Lunch at Rathmines Theatre. Registrants were allocated to one of six coaches for the coach trips, identified by colour.

Positive feedback was overwhelming

Comments included 'well done tour guides, morning teas and lunches by garden clubs were excellent, interesting mix of activities, speakers were amazing, excellent organization, well planned, very friendly interactions, best convention ever, congratulations and thank you'.

Negative feedback was minimal

Comments included 'difficult to follow program and link to the colour groups, preferred more gardens to art studios and Tree In Newcastle, entertainment not enjoyed by everyone but not disliked, local club lunches well received but not liked by everyone'. The GCA AGM was not on the evaluation sheet but received the only negative comments for process and audibility but the lunch was delicious.

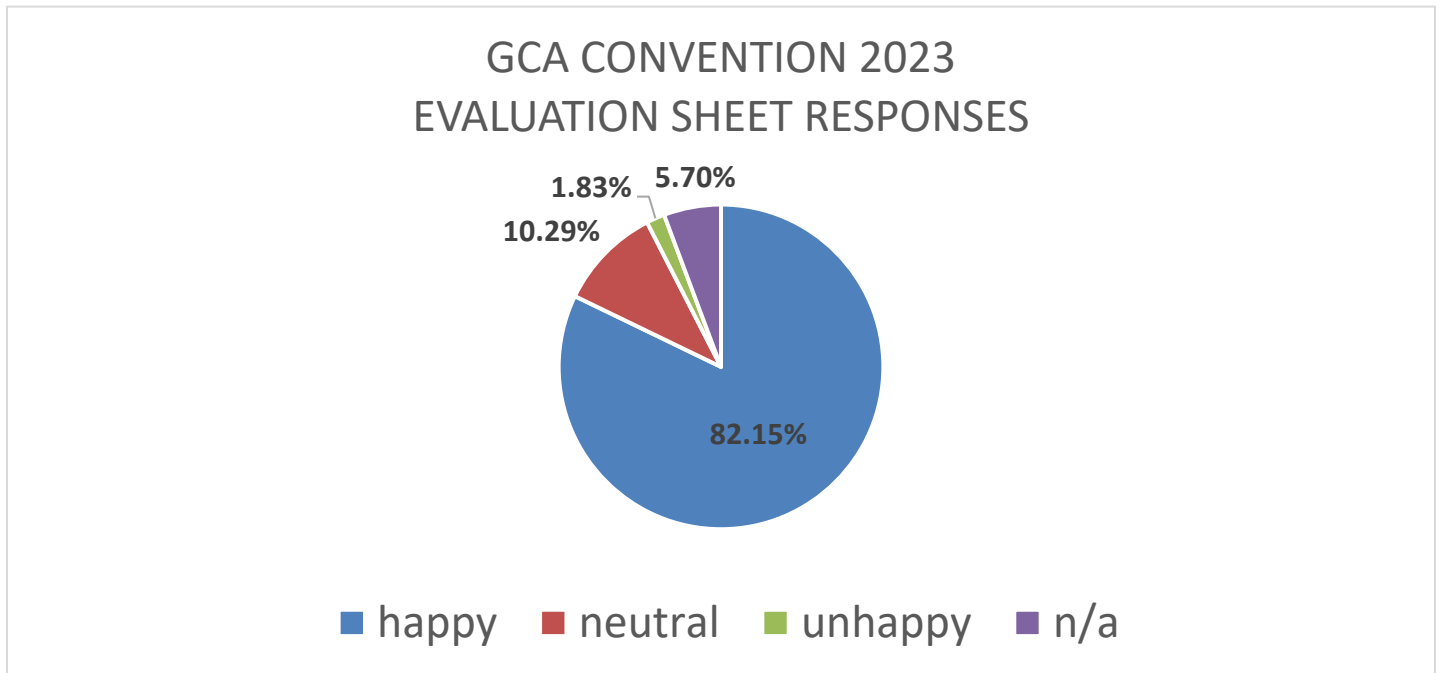
Wednesday night double feature movies An evening event attended by 60 people who clapped at the end. Two movies were shown being Kiss the Ground & Fantastic Fungi, introduced by John Watkins. Pizza and sweet treats, surplus from the morning teas, were appreciated between features. This activity was a risk as we thought that people would not want to come out at night but we were proved wrong with the appreciation shown.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who worked to make all our events work so well.

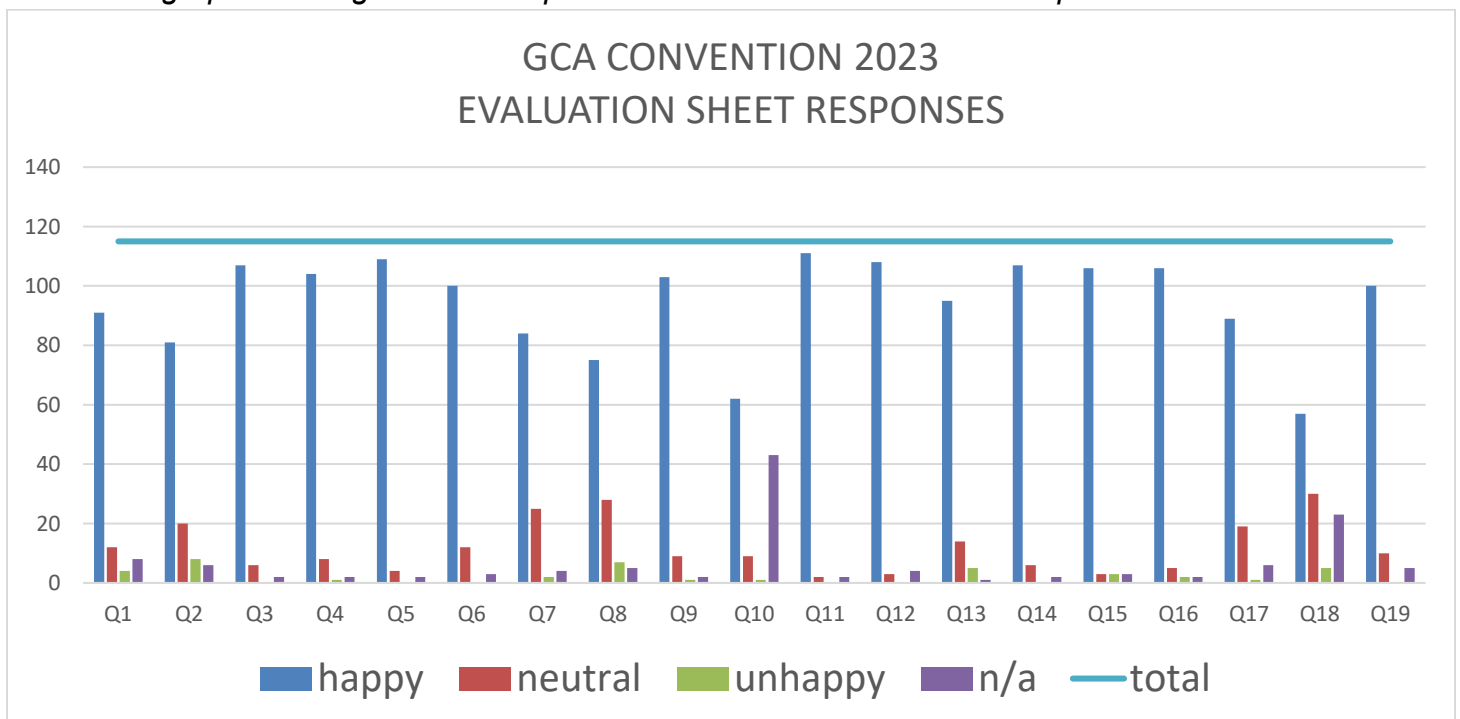


A Feedback sheet showing all the responses, together with the comments made, follows the descriptive charts below.

Pie chart showing the overall responses recorded on the convention feedback sheet.



Bar graph showing how the responses were distributed across the questions listed.





GCA BIENNIAL CONVENTION & AGM 2023
Hosted by Toronto & Districts Garden Club Inc.
EVALUATION

Thank you for attending the GCA 2023 Convention at Lake Macquarie.
 Please tell us what you think. Tick (or cross) an emoji!
 You can make specific comments at the end.

1: The Registration Day @ Warners Bay Theatre	😊	😐	😞	<u>No vote/N/A</u>
COMMENTS:	91	12	4	8 (115)
From instruction given by email couldn't find venue				
Registration venue was not clear.				
(Warners Bay Theatre is labelled Warners Bay Performing Arts Centre)				
2: The Welcome Reception @ Multi-Arts Pavilion	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	81	20	8	6 (115)
Venue cold and windy, difficult to find.				
Cold and windy, a long way to walk.				
Very cold. Too cold.				
Beautiful				
Freezing but food was great!				
Food queues were a problem				
3: Hunter Region Botanic Gardens	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	107	6	0	2 (115)
More consideration needed for those less agile.				
We were not offered the people mover at the Botanic Gardens				
but it was available for the Red tour group.				
Did not have a guide at the gardens.				
4: City tour & ANZAC Walk	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	104	8	1	2 (115)
Only one comment from an unhappy respondent.				
I felt the city tour quite boring.				



	😊	😐	☹️	No vote/N/A
5: Private Gardens				
COMMENTS:	109	4	0	2 (115)
Gardens were simply amazing, hosts very generous and welcoming. Needed more time. Amazing! Wonderful! More gardens, not so much art. Really loved the gardens that we visited Congratulations with the gardens				
6: Landcare Resource Office				
COMMENTS:	100	12	0	3 (115)
Not enough time So informative				
7: Trees in Newcastle				
COMMENTS:	84	25	2	4 (115)
TIN was a waste of time.				
8: Art Studios				
COMMENTS:	75	28	7	5 (115)
Not enough time All great except MAC & local artist.				
9: Lake Cruise				
COMMENTS:	103	9	1	2 (115)
Needed a commentary, Captain spoke only briefly and too quickly. So Lovely				
10: Movie night (<i>attended by 72</i>)				
COMMENTS:	62	9	1	43 (115)
Pizzas a surprise Loved Fungi film				
11: Morning Teas provided by Garden Clubs				
COMMENTS:	111	2	0	2 (115)
A bit more green salad and healthier food options. Excellent morning teas. Exceptionally good. Wonderful				



12: Lunches provided by Garden Clubs @ Botanic Gardens	😊	😐	😞	<u>No vote/N/A</u>
COMMENTS:	108	3	0	4 (115)
Exceptionally good				
So fresh				
13: Lunches at local clubs	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	95	14	5	1 (115)
Locations fantastic				
14: Tour guides	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	107	0	0	2 (115)
Michele & John were fantastic tour guides.				
Michele & John were absolutely wonderful. Their local knowledge made such a difference to the quality of the day tours. Michele & John did a great job as tour guides. Excellent guides.				
Green tour guides were excellent. Our green guides were wonderful. We loved our guides for green.				
Blue Tour guides good. Blue was the best coach.				
Wonderfully looked after by Barb on the orange bus.				
Absolutely lovely				
Hosts on the red bus were fantastic.				
Congratulations with the gardens and the care of the bus guides.				
Purple guides were exceptional				
Exceptional Yellow tour guides				
Ken & Ted were friendly, informative and extremely helpful.				
Great, thanks Ken & Ted				
15: Speaker's morning	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	106	3	3	3 (115)
Speakers on last day were amazing				
All 3 speakers were great				
16: Farewell Lunch	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	106	5	2	2 (115)
<i>(no comments)</i>				
17: Music Entertainment	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	89	19	1	6 (115)
<i>(no comments)</i>				



18: Frida Kahlo photo booth	😊	😐	😞	<u>No vote/N/A</u>
COMMENTS:	57	30	5	23 (115)
<i>(no comments)</i>				

19: Venues	😊	😐	😞	
COMMENTS:	100	10	0	5 (115)

Macquarie Club was an exceptional venue, amazing food and vegetarians well catered for.
 Amazing!
 Too many different venues.
 So well organized
 Venues all great but too many different ones.
 Without a car it was a little difficult to travel to the venues.
 A beautiful place to hold the convention
 Rathmines Theatre was the best venue.

Which group were you with?	GREEN	BLUE	ORANGE	PURPLE	RED	YELLOW
	16	15	20	15	17	18
	No Group stated					
	14			TOTAL RESPONSES 115		

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS *(not specific to the questions):*

Positives:

Enjoyed my whole week
 People all friendly
 Excellent week with great organization, thank you all for your wonderful work and friendship.
 Beautiful area, very enjoyable week, very nice people.
 Fantastic, All fantastic, wonderful week.
 My first convention, it has been a wonderful week, thank you.
 Toronto Garden Club has done a fabulous job, well done.
 Great event, great weather, great people/plants etc.
 Great diversity, well planned, extremely enjoyable
 Nice mix of interesting information, loved fungi film
 Well thought out program, excellent
 Everything was great, loved every minute of it. Congratulations and thank you.
 Thank you all involved in the organization, we appreciate the hard work that went into the event.
 Great week, great weather, great venue.



Wonderful week, educational, friendly, a relaxed time and met new friends.

What I attended was very good. Congratulations to all who organized and helped.

Hope people return to Lake Macquarie.

The convention was beautifully organized. Thank you so much for all the time and effort put in. Look forward to the next one.

A Great convention, top of the pops. It all ran very well, a lot of positive comments. Finished with a fun day. Super duper.

Fantastic organizational skills.

Thank you, very enjoyable. Thank you for a lovely week and enjoyable time.

A fantastic convention I enjoyed every part of it.

I can't speak highly enough of TDGC. I appreciate the work and dedication in organizing this event.

Location absolutely bliss and weather heaven sent. Everything was amazing. Well done. We came up from Sydney and were blown away, we've had an amazing week – thank you, will always be remembered.

Amazing organization, satisfaction guaranteed, well done, thank you

We both had a great time. Excellent week thank you. Wonderful to be part of it.

Wonderful area to explore, we had a very special week. A hard act to follow.

Meeting up with old friends and making new ones makes all conventions a highlight.

Very nice week. On the whole it was a wonderful time & event. A few hiccups but they were minor.

Congratulations and thank you. Congratulations to TDGC, well done.

Top job team Toronto 100%

Most enjoyable, thank you very much.

It's been an excellent week, thank you all for the hard work and enthusiasm.

Thank you to TDGC & convention committee. I would definitely come back to Lake Macquarie.

Interesting mix of gardens, cruise, studios & Landcare.

A massive congratulations to all members involved with every aspect of this convention.

I've had a great time, thank you.

Lake Mac provided a great attraction and natural venue and your club members are a lucky bunch of gardeners.

Thoroughly enjoyed the convention, many thanks.

A great convention, no complaints.

You all should be proud. Top marks to the garden club.

Very well done to you all. Really great work.

Well done, all aspects enjoyable. Everyone so friendly & happy.

Enjoyed it very much thank you.

Lake Macquarie marvelous place to visit, completely unexpected. Will definitely recommend to others.

Absolutely beautiful part of our country.

Well run convention, happy and friendly. Congratulations to those who organized.



Negatives:

Addresses for venues would have made it easier to find.

Some maps for visitors would be useful to find Multi Arts Pavilion.

Would have been much better if it was closer together or a shuttle bus provided.

The steps at Pippies were a killer. *(NB Pippies accommodation was a personal choice)*

Slight disappointment was not being together with our group on one bus which made transport to and from the pick-up point tricky but we coped.

The AGM could not be heard, despite saying we couldn't hear. The lunch however was delicious.

The GCA needs to learn to run an AGM correctly according to association regulations & protocols.

Sound system at AGM didn't work, couldn't hear.

Wednesday keynote speaker needed microphone training, he mumbled.

There was no general business at the AGM.

Suggestions:

More than one queue for food to speed up process.

Two tables or even 4 stations or double sided queue.

Program needed to be clearer – I didn't know what group number was green.

Perhaps a map marked with all the venues for those not familiar with the region.

More maps and location data.

Maybe transport for those who flew in/trained in. Some had a bus for them, others had to get a lift.

Itinerary could have been given out at the start of each day, also addresses of venues.

Like to have seen suburban or small gardens included and less time at galleries.

More gardens please. More gardens next time.

Bottled water to buy or on hand during the day.

Perhaps those in groups given the same colour (from a day tripper)

It would be beneficial if bus guides gave commentary about area, vegetations etc. for us who have never been in this area before.

Transportation to Farewell Lunch for people who do not have cars would have enhanced the experience.

REMARKS FROM TDGC SUB COMMITTEE

We were pleased and honoured to host the GCA Biennial Convention and AGM 2023.

Overwhelmingly the great majority of people were happy, as shown on the graphs and comments above, which makes us very proud of what was achieved.

There were a few glitches along the way that affected a very small number of participants. Less than 2% of participants were unhappy and we hope that our friendly approach eased their pain. Those who asked to be with friends on the coach tours were accommodated. This highlights the need for an unhurried registration day process and the need to know with whom the registrants are travelling.

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, communications failed and people did not find the information provided that they needed. This is especially true as we move towards digital communications. All the



GCA

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September 15, 2023



information mentioned in the comments was available both in the convention bag and online. The convention bag contained a region map, the convention booklet containing all the addresses and program outline, a water bottle to take on the excursions to avoid plastic waste, insect repellent and more. The full printout of the program was provided together with the convention bag. The displays at the Registration Day included a pin board with how to match your colour lanyard with your group, a region map with locations marked, and a PowerPoint presentation was looping through all day with all the information needed, including movie trailers for movie night. Volunteers and committee members were available to answer any questions and make changes to suit peoples needs. In addition, all this information was published on the web site which also had a smart phone version for those who had access.

Despite our best efforts, there were some negative comments made about the availability of maps, addresses and transport. This will become less of a problem as future retirees will be more computer literate. We were mindful that not everyone can find information online and are disappointed that some of our guests did not find the information they needed in the handouts.

Overall the overwhelming amount of positive comments, as listed above, concluded that this convention met the sentiments in the GCA motto 'friendship through gardens'.