

3.7. Sydney Library of Things Tool Library

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ATTACHMENTS: Nil

Nil.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an update on the “Sydney Library of Things”, or “SLoT”, a new community run tool library which will be trialed for 12 months at the Coal Loader in part of the workshop space next to the Artist Studio. Council endorsed the trial on 22 February 2021 and is expected to launch on 12 June 2022. As well as reducing local resource use, and supporting the share economy, the tool library will create a new sustainability focused community hub which may lead to an ongoing “Environmental community group in residence” program at the Coal Loader.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Minor carpentry and electrical works totalling less than \$5000 have been allocated from the Environment Levy to provide a secure storage space for a tool library, and other potential future environmental groups, in the workshop area at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability. The space has been offered free of charge to the SLoT for the trial period. This is consistent with the not for profit nature of the community group, the significant local environmental and community benefits of the proposal, as well as the value it will add in contributing to the vision and objectives of Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. THAT** the report providing an update on the Sydney Library of Things is received.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Our Living Environment
- 1.2 North Sydney is sustainable and resilient

BACKGROUND

Tool Libraries have started popping up around greater Sydney over the last few years, including the Inner West (<http://innerwesttoolibrary.com.au/>), Wollongong (<https://www.make-do.com.au/>) and the Blue Mountains (<https://toolo.com.au/>). Members borrow items like power drills, sewing machines, electric whipper snippers, party catering kits, inflatable jumping castles, board games etc. The libraries therefore reduce the purchase of multiple new but rarely used items throughout the local community, reducing resource use and eventual waste to landfill.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

DETAIL

Council supported a proposal received from a recently formed local not for profit community group, the "Sydney Library of Things" or "SLoT", seeking to establish a community run "tool library" at the Coal Loader in part of the workshop space next to the Artist Studio. The group is made up of committee members from the lower north shore, and is led by Bridget Kennedy, the current artist in residence in Ridge St and coordinator of the Sydney Edible Garden Trail. The SLoT is modeled on the operations of other Sydney tool libraries and is informed by surveys of potential local volunteers and members. More than 40 volunteers have already committed to help run the library. A tool library in North Sydney, where most residents live in apartments and where storage space is limited, is likely to be well patronised, especially in a location like the Coal Loader which enjoys strong foot traffic from sustainability minded visitors.

The tool library will be open for four hours on a Saturday initially with the option to expand opening hours to Thursday afternoons depending on demand. To borrow items from the library community members will need to take out membership. Membership fees are expected to range from \$21.25 for quarterly concession membership to \$110 for a full annual subscription. This will fund a community librarian, development of a website, Internet hosting and service provision, business registration, tool repairs, purchase of battery tools, graphic design costs, advertising and software costs.

Items for loan are currently being sourced from the community by donation. The items will be

owned by the SLoT, who will be responsible for their regular maintenance to ensure they are in good and safe working order. Similarly, the SLoT will be responsible for providing guidance to borrowers to ensure they know how to use borrowed items and are aware of, and can mitigate against, any associated risks.

If the initial 12-month trial is a success, Council will consider establishing an ongoing “Environmental community group in residence” program, using an expression of interest process similar to the Artist in residence program. This could extend the tenure of the SLoT beyond 12 months and would continue use of part of the workshop space as a community run environmental sustainability facility into the medium and longer term.