



# AGENDA

A meeting of the **Environment Reference Group** will be held on Cammeraygal Land at the Ros Crichton Pavilion Council Chambers, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney at 6:15 PM on Tuesday 5 March 2024.  
The agenda is as follows.

Therese Manns  
**GENERAL MANAGER**



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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Confirmation of Minutes .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Disclosures of Interest .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Committee Reports .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1. <i>Sustainability Rebates Program Update .....</i>	<i>4</i>
3.2. <i>Update on Community Circular Economy Initiatives at the Coal Loader .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>4. General Business .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. Closure .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## **1. Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 November 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## **2. Disclosures of Interest**

Nil.

### 3. Committee Reports

#### 3.1. Sustainability Rebates Program Update

<b>AUTHOR</b>	Jordan Moy, Sustainability Education Officer
<b>ENDORSED BY</b>	Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	Nil
<b>CSP LINK</b>	1. Our Living Environment 1.1 Protected, enhanced and biodiverse natural environment 1.2 Environmentally sustainable community

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on North Sydney Councils' Sustainability Rebates Program since its inception in October 2023.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- The Sustainability Rebates program launched in October 2023 and supports properties in North Sydney to implement energy and water saving initiatives for households, strata and businesses.
- The Sustainability Rebates program has proven to be well received by the North Sydney community and has had a strong up take of rebates across all property types and most rebate items available.
- Since program inception, Council has approved 41 community applications and has allocated over half the annual budget over a three- month period.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**1. THAT** the report on the Sustainability Rebates Program be received.

## Background

From March-June 2023, the North Sydney community was consulted to gain feedback on a proposed sustainability rebates program. A total of 89 responses were received from the community with most respondents indicating that a rebate program would make a difference in whether they would take action to adopt clean energy technology and transition to all electric homes and apartment buildings.

As a result, the Sustainability Rebates Program was launched in October 2023, with a program budget of \$80,000 funded from Council's Environment Levy.

## Report

The key statistics for the program so far include:

- 41 approved rebate applications (See Figs. 1 and 3).
- 99 kW solar PV approved.
- 42 kWh solar batteries approved.
- \$331,029 community spend.
- \$43,894 Council rebate spend.
- 7.5 community investment to rebate ratio.
- Approved rebates for all three property types (See Fig. 2).
- Even spread of approved rebates across the North Sydney LGA (See Fig. 4).
- 428 visits to the Sustainability Rebates webpage since program launch.
- Positive feedback provided by the community and program participants (See Fig. 5)

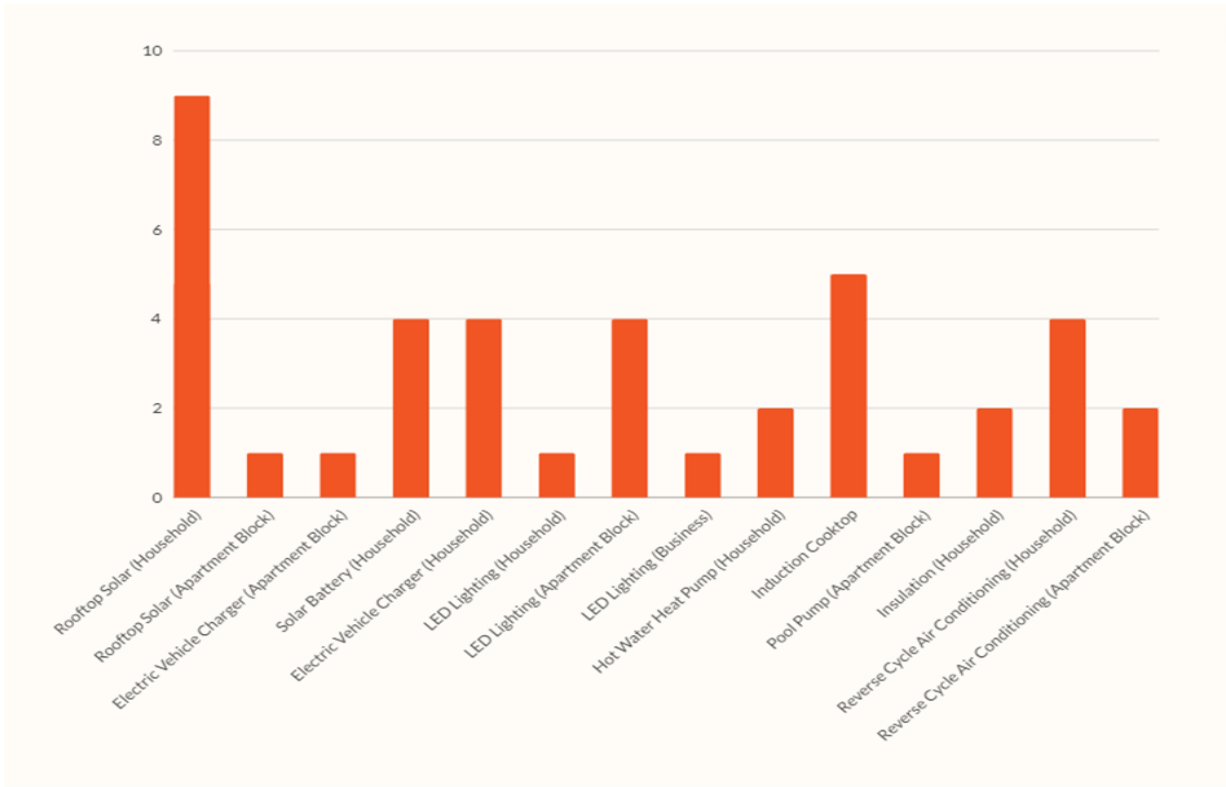


Fig. 1. Approved rebate items.

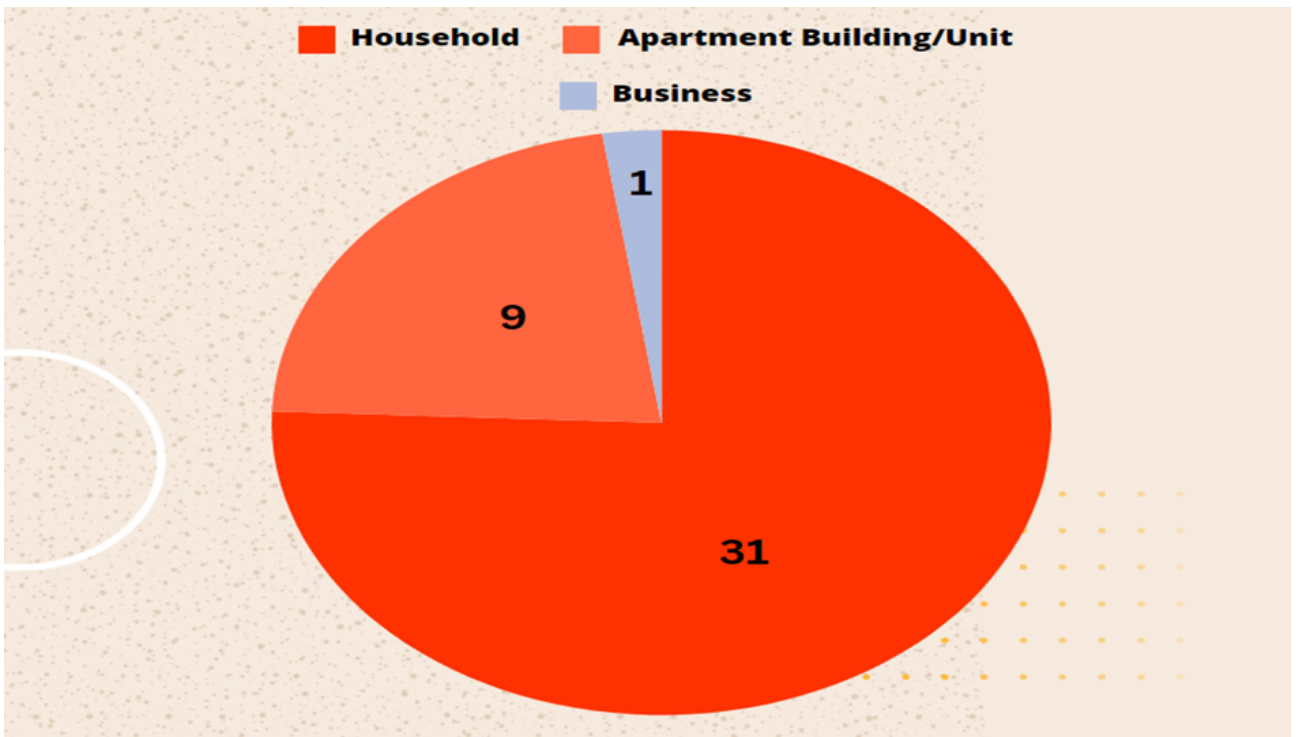


Fig. 2. Rebate property type.

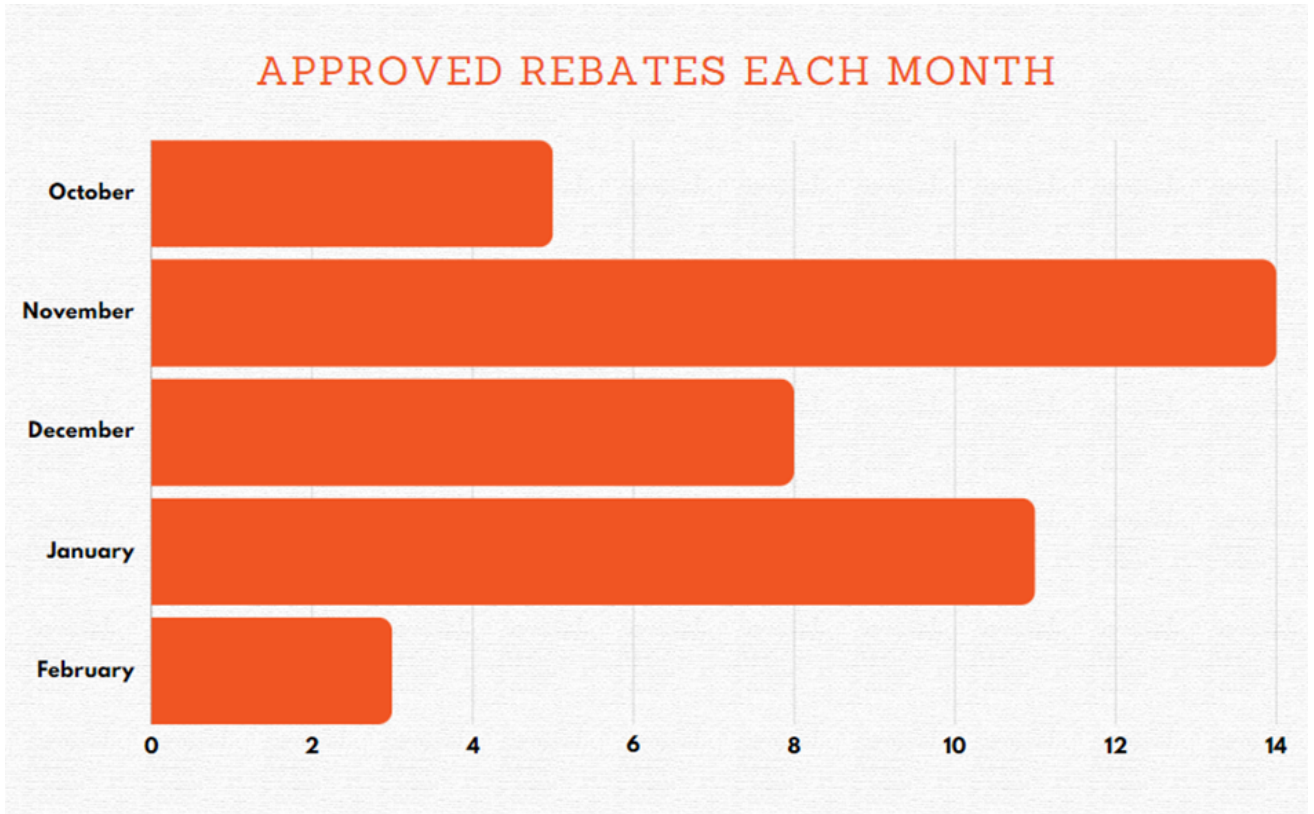


Fig.3. Approved rebates each month since launch of program.

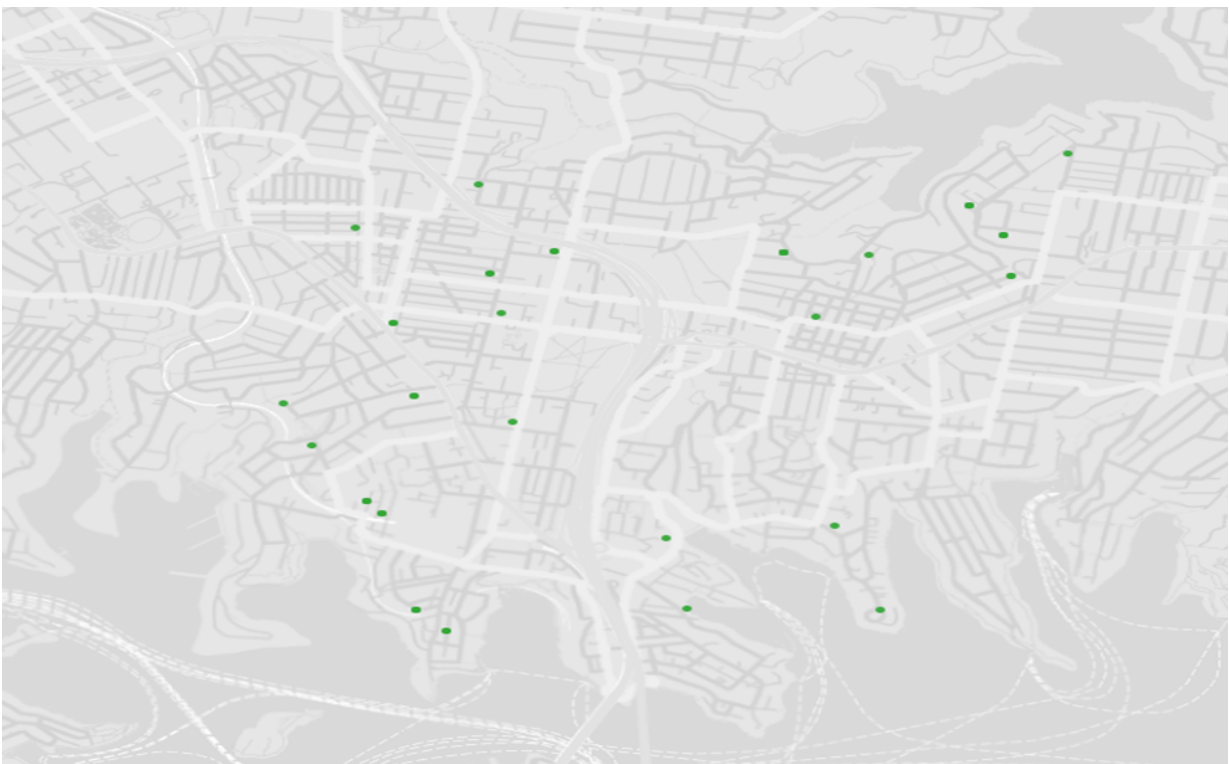


Fig. 4. Rebate locations across North Sydney.



Fig. 5. Resident feedback from program.

## NEXT STEPS

An annual review of the program will commence before the end of the financial year to determine which rebate items will be kept in the program for FY24/25. The review process will be on-going to ensure Council is providing rebates that are best placed to serve the community and assist with emission reductions.

Currently there are 5 rebate items that have not yet been applied for including Business Kitchen Electrification, Rainwater Tanks, Sydney Water's Waterfix Program, Business Level 2 Energy Audit and Rooftop Solar Health Check. Informal feedback from the community has identified potential rebate items that are not currently included in the rebate program including:

- Smart meter board upgrades
- Micro Grid rebate
- Technical advice for engineering or electrical work for strata
- E-bikes
- Green Energy
- Disconnection from gas

A more detailed evaluation of the resident experience in this program will commence closer to the end of the financial year and will include both quantitative and qualitative evaluation. Community feedback will assist to determine the level of support provided by Council is appropriate and to best ensure the program funding is fully allocated each financial year.



## Funding

Based on the current rate of program expenditure it is expected that the funding for the Sustainability Rebates program will be fully allocated before the end of the financial year. After all program funds have been spent, the community will not be able to apply for a rebate until the start of the 24/25 financial year. North Sydney residents will be placed on a waitlist for individual rebate items and notified on 1 July 2024 when they can apply.

Other Sydney based Councils offering a rebate program have not received any negative community feedback about this process and have been able to manage any reputational risk by providing regular community updates on available funding, similar to the update that was sent in the February Green Events newsletter (See Fig 6 below).



Fig.6. Sustainability Rebates funding update in the February Green Events community newsletter.

## Consultation requirements

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

## Financial/Resource Implications

This project is funded through Council's Environment Levy. The project budget is \$80,000 with funds being allocated for direct community rebates, minimal service fees and a software platform to process the rebates.

## Legislation

There are no legislative considerations required for the update report.

### 3.2. Update on Community Circular Economy Initiatives at the Coal Loader

<b>AUTHOR</b>	Danielle Birkbeck, Manager Environmental Services
<b>ENDORSED BY</b>	Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	1. TS Lo T infographic Jan 2024 [3.2.1 - 1 page]
<b>CSP LINK</b>	1. Our Living Environment 1.2 Environmentally sustainable community

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the community circular economy initiatives being hosted at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability. These initiatives include the Sydney Library of Things and the Fix-It Hub repair café.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- The Sydney Library of Things (TSLot) and the Fix-It Hub are two circular economy initiatives being hosted at the Coal Loader.
- TSLot currently has 30 volunteers and 126 active memberships with 1,259 item loans since opening in November 2021.
- The Fix-It Hub is undertaking a 6-month trial which will be completed in April 2024. Following review, it is anticipated an ongoing commitment to run the repair café will be formalised with TSLot.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** the update on circular economy initiatives at the Coal Loader report be received.

## Background

The Coal Loader currently hosts two community initiatives that work towards achieving a circular economy in the North Sydney local government area. The Sydney Library of Things (TSLot) and the Fix-It Hub are both models of circular economy programs developed to keep items out of landfill and embody the principles of reuse, repair, and share.

TSLot was established at the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability in 2021 and has been operating successfully for the last 2 years. The Fix-It Hub, established in a response to a Councillor notice of motion in October 2022, is currently in a 6-month trial period, and will be reviewed in April 2024.

## Report

### The Sydney Library of Things

Established in early 2021 and in operation since November 2021, TSLot has undergone substantial growth with currently 30 volunteers and 126 active memberships. A Christmas discount membership special resulted in 14 new annual memberships, and it is anticipated numbers will continue to steadily rise over the year. TSLot is now financially secure with growing membership numbers and associated fees.

In addition to customer service staff and the core organising group, TSLot now have an established maintenance team who conduct fortnightly maintenance sessions to ensure the upkeep and safety auditing of items.

There are currently 286 items which can be borrowed with the top 10 shown in Table 1 below.

Item	Type	Loans
<a href="#">Ryobi Electric Hedger Trimmer</a>	Electric Hedge Trimmers	31
<a href="#">Water Pressure Washer by Gerni #1</a>	Pressure Washers	27
<a href="#">Food dehydrator, 6 shelf</a>	Canning, Preserving & Homebrew	25
<a href="#">Extension cord - 18.5 m for indoor/outdoor use</a>	Extension Cords	21
<a href="#">Gazebo Oztrail 3m x 3m Grey Cover</a>	Canopies	21
<a href="#">Ultimate Baker's Oven Bread Maker</a>	Appliances	21
<a href="#">Triangle Sander</a>	Sanders & Planers	20
<a href="#">Folding Trestle Table - 'Tim'</a>	Trestles	19
<a href="#">Bunting - yellow</a>	Party & Events	18
<a href="#">Ice Cream Maker</a>	Appliances	18

Table 1. Top 10 loans

TSLot recently passed 1000 loans, with the current figure of 1,259 loans made since opening in November 2021.

Marketing is undertaken by the group, and they now have 443 subscribers to the newsletter that is sent out every 4-6 weeks. Social media remains the main avenue for marketing and their online presence continues to increase. There are currently 3,665 Facebook followers (an increase of 239) and 1,321 Instagram followers (an increase of 217). Figure 1 below shows the demographics of the TSLoT audience.

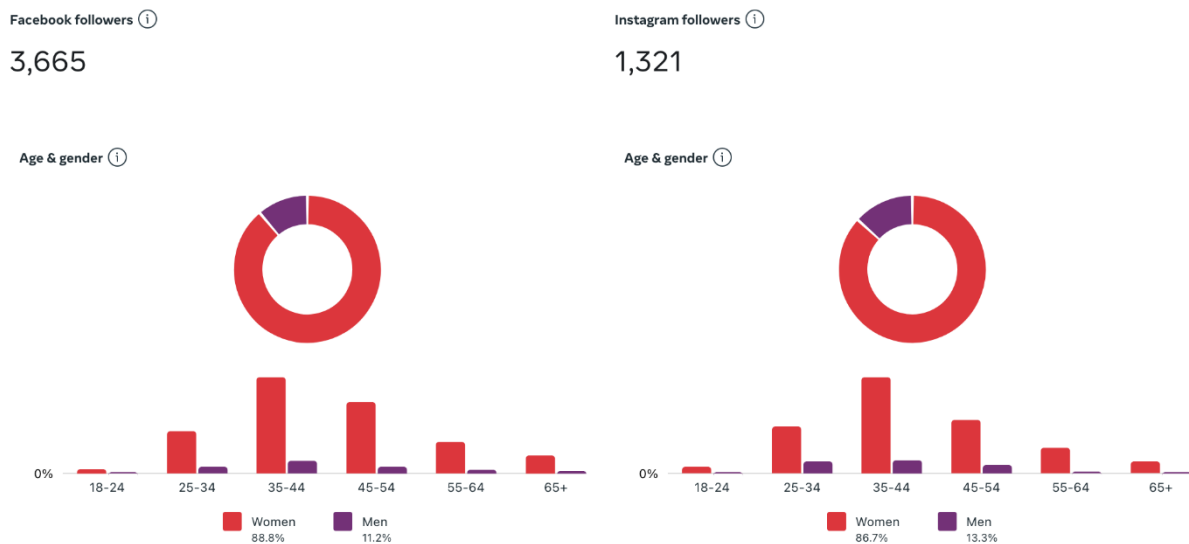


Figure 1. Social media demographics.

As noted in the last update report, the success of TSLoT at The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability has encouraged other councils to open a library of things (LoT) in their local government areas (LGA). The Lane Cove LoT will be opening in late February and the Randwick LoT is planned to open in mid-2024. At present the group is also in discussion with Hunter's Hill and Northern Beaches Council's.

With the increasing success of the program, the current location at the Coal Loader is proving limited in space for storing the number of loan items. The group have begun discussions with Council staff regarding the extension of the space into the next available workshop at the Coal Loader.

### **Fix-It Hub**

The Fix-it Hub was established by The Sydney Library of Things (TSLoT) in collaboration with Council staff, to support Councils sustainability programs and address a Councillor notice of motion on the need for, and establishment of, a repair café in the North Sydney area.

Initial stages of project development identified the need to trial the Fix-It Hub for a 6-month period to effectively analyse the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities before further commitment. This review, scheduled for April 2024, will allow for changes to be made to the delivery format before commencing a longer-term commitment.

Currently the Fix-It Hub operates on the second Saturday of the month (10am-1pm) from the Mess Hall at The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability. To date, four Hubs have been held with increasing numbers of items being repaired at each event (see Table 2 below).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of Items repaired</b>
11 November	16
9 December	19
13 January	23
10 February	29

Table 2. Dates and items repaired.

From a base of three volunteers, there are now 12 volunteers across several repair categories including electrical, clothing, jewellery, hand sewing, tool sharpening and customer service. Items for repair vary greatly and have included toasters, lamps, hair irons, skirts, trousers, umbrellas, chairs, toys, secateurs, scissors, DVD/CD players and even an audio cassette player. Success rate with repairs is approximately 75% each month.

Following the trial period review and given the increasing success of the project to date, it is anticipated that the Fix-It Hub will continue at the Coal Loader and a launch event will be planned for April/May 2024.

TSLoT thank North Sydney Council for their continued support and look forward to an on-going relationship at The Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability.

### **Consultation requirements**

Community engagement is not required.

### **Financial/Resource Implications**

The Fix-It Hub is funded through Council's Environmental Levy and has been budgeted for in the FY 23/24 Coal Loader events program.

There are no resource implications.

### **Legislation**

There are no legislative requirements or consideration.

## THE SYDNEY LIBRARY OF THINGS: JULY 2023 - JANUARY 2024



### 30 volunteers

Volunteers fill a variety of roles from executive committee, maintenance, IT & fundraising to front desk support.

### 126 members

Of these, 33 are annual memberships which guarantees on-going income.



### 286 loan items

Items include garden tools, kitchen items, power tools, camping gear, games and puzzles.

### 1259 loans made

Members can borrow 5 items every fortnight for two weeks at a time.



### 14,341 loan days

The number of days that items have been out of the library and being used by members.

### 443 newsletter subscribers

They receive a newsletter every 4-6 weeks containing information about new library items and how to use them.



### 3,665 Facebook followers

They receive regular posts about TSLoT, items that are available and how others are using items.

### 1,321 Instagram followers

They receive regular posts about TSLoT, items that are available and how others are using items.



THE SYDNEY LIBRARY OF THINGS  
AT  
THE COAL LOADER CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABILITY



## 4. General Business

### 1. Phil Worrall's items discussed from the previous meeting with the Motion.

- Cat ownership
- Eco emanations ex elsewhere-snippets from other Councils etc to inform and/or motivate, namely clothing and textile recycling, soft plastics, red bin waste reduction.

#### **Motion**

1. That ERG recommends Council prepare a report on all cat ownership and control measures, for consideration by Council, ERG and Precincts;
2. That the said report includes an educational and awareness campaign to promote sound cat ownership practices in the North Sydney local government area.

### 2. Jane Theau would like an update on the following items from the previous meeting:

- discussion of inclusion of container recycling facilities in commercial development applications.
- Increase in bubblers where bottled water sold, and inclusion in commercial DAs
- update on success of Repair Cafe so far
- any progress on finding natural alternative to woven plastic barriers?

### 3. Bruce Handmer would like to discuss the following:

- North Sydney Council investigate how changes to its policies and procedures can reduce noise pollution within North Sydney Council's LGA. Specifically but not limited to:
  - Construction noise
  - Traffic noise
- North Sydney Council investigate whether they can approach the NSW government to look at improving the current noise pollution regulations and enforcement to provide NSW residents with a safer, healthier environment .

## 5. Closure

