

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

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ATTACHMENTS	1. TS Lo T infographic Jan 2024 [3.2.1 - 1 page]
CSP LINK	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
Ryobi Electric Hedger Trimmer	Electric Hedge Trimmers	31
Water Pressure Washer by Gerni #1	Pressure Washers	27
Food dehydrator, 6 shelf	Canning, Preserving & Homebrew	25
Extension cord - 18.5 m for indoor/outdoor use	Extension Cords	21
Gazebo Oztrail 3m x 3m Grey Cover	Canopies	21
Ultimate Baker's Oven Bread Maker	Appliances	21
Triangle Sander	Sanders & Planers	20
Folding Trestle Table - 'Tim'	Trestles	19
Bunting - yellow	Party & Events	18
Ice Cream Maker	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.

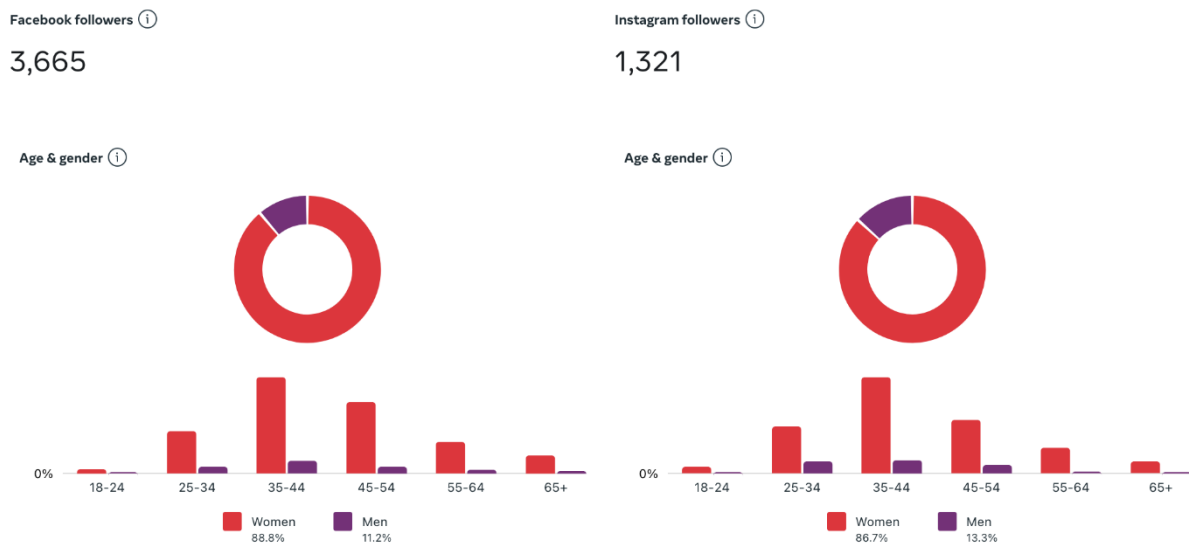


Figure 1. Social media demographics.

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).

Date	Number of Items repaired
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

