Sustainable Communities AGM – Campbelltown Repair Café Report: 2021

The Process of Establishing CRC

The Campbelltown Repair Café came about as a motion from Council for staff to investigate a Tool & Equipment Library/Repair Café in the area. Council Community Development Officer, Sophie partnered with local community member, Susan Lloyd (who had also expressed interest in a Repair Café) to further investigate both initiatives – a Repair Café and a Tool Library. The following were considered – different models; what already existed in Adelaide; and what potential locations were available in our local community. Sue's experience and involvement with other Adelaide Repair Cafes was a huge help in this endeavour.

A community Zoom meeting was held on 26 May 2020 – two sessions, one in the morning and one in the evening. This was promoted through Council social media spaces and then shared to other local Facebook groups, civic pride groups, school parent groups. Also, emails were sent to all local churches, service clubs, independent living providers. Both sessions were well attended, and a couple of agencies expressed interest in being involved or hosting the Repair Café. From the initial community meeting a mailing list of community members wanting to be involved was drafted and this group continued to meet and discuss operational and logistic issues, location, promotions etc. Council staff worked with the group to run 4 trial sessions from October – December 2020 at two different locations and times. One was on a Sunday in conjunction with Magill Sunrise Market and the other on a Thursday at the St Martins Anglican Church Community Thursday. Sue set up a Facebook page for group community identity and promotions. Leaflets were printed for letterbox drops and public display. Banners were also made to be displayed on venue fences one week in advance.

At the end of 2020, the group voted on how to proceed with the initiative. The decision was to hold the event monthly. Since then, the Campbelltown Repair Café has been running in conjunction with the Magill Sunrise Markets based at a Council facility. The event takes place on the second Sunday of each month.

St Martins have decided to continue with their own Repair Café – there are a few volunteers that overlap and do both, but they are separate operations.

Council staff supported the group to move towards an independent model by inviting SCSA to a Zoom meeting. They were asked to share how they support other similar initiatives. From there a coordinating committee was formed of 4

members with Vas Dolman taking up the coordinator role. Vas coordinated the group's SCSA membership which provided support, insurance, promotion, and banking access for the volunteers and the CRC. The coordinating committee has since applied and been successful in securing a minor Council grant to help toward the purchase of consumables, tools, and equipment. The group now runs independently, with Council support for printing leaflets, assistance with promotions and community grants.

The current situation:

Now, the Campbelltown Repair Café has 30 volunteers offering their service as either repairer, guide, or administrative support. Our offerings include sewing/darning, needle felting, locksmith, mechanical/bicycles, wooden, jewellery, dolls/teddys/soft toys, software, knife sharpening, and electrical.

Over the last few months, the popularity of the Repair Café has steadily grown, as attempts to promote the event have increased, and satisfied item owners are returning, and advocating for the CRC by spreading the word. CRC is currently averaging 40 repairs at each event. Promotion has included the following.

1. Social media posts on both Facebook and Instagram have attracted more followers. Group FB pages like Love Campbelltown and Campbelltown Council have promoted the Repair Café.
2. The use of Eventbrite has attracted users of the event management and ticketing website.
3. The Council have promoted the event in their monthly newsletter.
4. The group has set up an email address where interested parties can communicate with the group privately. This has been useful for potential new volunteers to seek information, and for the public to ask questions.
5. Volunteers have conducted flyer drops, displayed posters, set up leaflet stands in local businesses, distributed flyers to local exercise groups, sent monthly emails to local community service groups, churches, aged care facilities, childcare centres, preschools, and schools.
6. Vas and Sophie delivered a PowerPoint presentation for community members receiving home support from the Council, at their monthly meeting.

The coordinating group are collecting monthly data and keeping records from each event. This is done to assist in planning, monitoring trends, measuring the effectiveness of advertising, recording item owner's feedback, and measuring the reduction to landfill (in kilograms) being made by the community.