

Resolution of Council

29 July 2024

Item 13.5

Tackling Textile Waste in the City of Sydney

Moved by Councillor Worling, seconded by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) in Australia, it is estimated that 52 per cent of the textiles we buy are sent to landfill every year;
- (ii) in June 2022, Council endorsed the Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 and this included a commitment for 2050 that, “A circular economy approach is imbedded in product, services and systems”;
- (iii) the City supports circularity through business support programs, community workshops, library services and grants; and
- (iv) specifically, the City of Sydney is taking concerted action to reduce textile waste, via:
 - (a) hosting regular clothes swap and repair events for residents, held in partnership with local organisations such as The Clothing Exchange, Eco Styles and Sew Make Create;
 - (b) funding various Innovation and Ideas grants dedicated to clothing circularity and cutting textile waste. These have included FashTech Lab, an Australian Fashion Council initiative to digitise development of fashion collections, and Dempstah, a design practice exploring textile waste and recycled yarns;
 - (c) the City’s quarterly Recycle It Saturday events, Ultimo recycling pop-ups, and free doorstep recycling service allow for textiles to be dropped off;

- (d) a 12-month uniform recycling trial with Upparel (completed April 2024), where old uniforms from our cleaning, resource recovery, and parks teams were collected and recycled; and
- (e) the creation of a five-year Textiles Action Plan and market research project for Sydney councils, in collaboration South Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC);

(B) Council further note:

- (i) the City currently has collection options for mattresses, e-waste, bulky pick-ups, garden waste, mixed recycling, food scraps and general waste. There is not, however, a dedicated waste stream or pathway for textiles or clothing recycling;
- (ii) to combat the improper waste disposal of textiles, the National Clothing Product Stewardship Scheme, Seamless, was launched in June 2023;
- (iii) in December 2023, Council resolved to investigate partnerships with textile resource recovery company, BlockTexx. This company operates a series of linen collections around Australia called 'Give a Sheet® for the Planet!' where Australians can donate their unwanted household linen, sheets and towels to be converted into valuable, high-grade recycled materials; and
- (iv) Ethical Clothing Australia (ECA), and other organisations such as Fashion Revolution and Thread Together are helping to clean up the industry; and

(C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:

- (i) as part of the community waste education campaign, develop and implement waste education initiatives to educate residents about how to keep clothing out of red and yellow bins, and ultimately, out of landfill;
- (ii) investigate opportunities to expand our textile recycling services to include options for unwearable clothes, towels and bed linen and shoes;
- (iii) expand education about how to shop sustainably, including supporting brands that have signed up to the Seamless product stewardship scheme, via City of Sydney residents via the City's communication channels;
- (iv) continue to organise clothing swaps and repair workshops to educate residents, spark behavioural change and encourage community-led initiatives for reuse and repair through a dedicated Grants program;
- (v) identify other mechanisms across procurement, design and resource recovery to increase circularity and minimise any textiles that are thrown away in our City;
- (vi) expand the uniform recycling trial to a permanent service for all City of Sydney uniforms; and
- (vii) provide an update to Councillors via CEO Update on actions undertaken.

Carried unanimously.

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