A Model for Innovative Community Engagement: Tech Shed at City of Canada Bay

Joy Suliman
The Learning Space Coordinator
The Learning Space, Rhodes

VISION
A connected community which is actively engaged with digital technology, new ideas, and lifelong learning

MISSION
To create a vibrant and welcoming space which supports learning, creativity, innovation, and community
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Program area/usage</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAO robot</td>
<td>Robotics and coding&lt;br&gt;Outreach, general programs&lt;br&gt;School holidays&lt;br&gt;Promotion and PR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Little Bits – smart home and workshop kits</strong></td>
<td>Electronics and making&lt;br&gt;Robotics and coding&lt;br&gt;Product prototyping and design thinking&lt;br&gt;General programs&lt;br&gt;School holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>3d printers</td>
<td>Electronics and making&lt;br&gt;Product prototyping and design thinking&lt;br&gt;Social innovation and entrepreneurship&lt;br&gt;General programs&lt;br&gt;School holidays&lt;br&gt;Community engagement and outreach&lt;br&gt;Community resource and accessible use</td>
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<tr>
<td>AO printer Panorama printer</td>
<td>Electronics and making&lt;br&gt;Product prototyping and design thinking&lt;br&gt;Social innovation and entrepreneurship&lt;br&gt;General programs&lt;br&gt;School holidays&lt;br&gt;Community engagement and outreach&lt;br&gt;Community resource and accessible use</td>
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<td>Macbooks, Ipad, Makey Makey, lego etc</td>
<td>Photo, video and music&lt;br&gt;Electronics and making&lt;br&gt;Robotics and coding&lt;br&gt;Product prototyping and design thinking&lt;br&gt;Social innovation and entrepreneurship&lt;br&gt;General programs&lt;br&gt;School holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studio Gear Photo, video, music, rehearsal</td>
<td>Photo, video and music&lt;br&gt;Electronics and making&lt;br&gt;Robotics and coding&lt;br&gt;Product prototyping and design thinking&lt;br&gt;Social innovation and entrepreneurship&lt;br&gt;General programs&lt;br&gt;School holidays</td>
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Types of activities

- Impromptu and drop-in
- Skills intros and short workshops
- Formal workshops and courses
LET’S MAKE

• Drop-in workshops
• Promoted through library EDM and social media
• Great response from all age demographics
• Promoting Rhodes
Our starting point

• Liveable Communities Grant from FACS NSW
• Funding for programs delivering health and wellbeing outcomes for older Australians
• Pilot for 12 months
• Must be on a path to becoming self sustaining
• Extensive research, consultation, and planning
How we kicked it all off

- Found a local champion, and employed him as a facilitator
- Put the word out in every Council publication and communication channel
- Invited every likely looking candidate who walked through the doors
- Personally invited the local Men’s Shed at Concord, and other local community groups
Open Day

Open invitation – over 40 people in attendance
Introduced our equipment and facilities
Encouraged questions
Surveyed potential participants
The first 6 months . . .

- Worked with an initial program structure
- Introduced workshops in 3D printing and 3D modelling, OTTO robot building, programming in python, and photography
- TLS staff were heavily involved
- Facilitation was very hands-on
Transition to sustainability

• Invited participants to plan a way forward for their group
• Lots of conversations and negotiation with both participants and other stakeholders
• Agreement to join Harry’s Shed
• Library continues to support with regular meeting space, gear, equipment, and refreshments
Benefits for participants
Benefits for stakeholders

• Harry’s Shed has new members with new skills
• Harry’s Shed members have access to 3D printing, electronics, coding and digital media production equipment and skills to further their other projects
Benefits for Community

• Tech shed participates in outreach and community activities alongside our library service

• Participants are often active in other networks eg. Sydney Heritage Fleet
Benefits for City of Canada Bay Libraries

We upskilled alongside this community of practice
Participants are regulars in our other programs as well
Connect us with other groups and networks, locally and across NSW
Built, upgraded and maintain a CR10mini 3D printer and delta 3d printer from kits
We built our makerspace classroom around them, week by week (still going)
Trialled and tested all our safety and induction workflows, procedures, and policies with this group in mind
Built a fleet of OTTO robots we use regularly in programs
Join us in community outreach and education programs
These days they cost us tea and biscuits!