

# Media Release

8 July 2025

## **Swapping fast fashion for savvy sustainability at free Cockburn clothes swaps**

Everything old can be new again when communities swap and share resources to save money and reduce waste.

About 500 people have attended six community clothes swaps organised by the City of Cockburn in the past two years, with hundreds of textile and fashion items saved from landfill.

City of Cockburn Service Lead Sustainability and Climate Change, Clare Courtauld, said it was heartening to see the reuse and recycle movement continue to gain momentum in Cockburn.

“At our most recent community clothes swap and fashion exchange event on 28 June, attendees brought in 331 good quality items to swap, with 285 items finding new homes. And it’s all free!” Ms Courtauld said.

“This shows people are thinking about how much they spend on clothing, how much clothing they actually need and how clothing in good condition can be repurposed and given a new life instead of ending up in the rubbish bin.

“It’s been really positive to see so much growing interest in a space where people are again looking for ways to be responsible for the waste they create in everyday life.”

According to research by The Australia Institute, more than 200,000 tonnes of textile waste is disposed of in Australian landfills every year, while more than 100,000 tonnes is shipped overseas.

Ms Courtauld said the average Australian bought 56 brand new clothing items each year, with many only kept for a short period.

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“On average, in Australia a garment is used just seven times before it is thrown away. Most are created very cheaply from polyester fabric, a form of plastic, by fast-fashion manufacturers,” Ms Courtauld said.

“Our clothes swaps and a variety of other workshops in partnership with community organisations are part of the City’s Textile and Single-use Plastic Waste Reduction and Awareness Program.

The events have included fashion workshops by Feel Good Fashionista Loraine Martin who shines a fresh educational light on clothes shopping and gaining a ‘new’ wardrobe without spending a cent.

Her advice includes how to dress more sustainably, shop mindfully and tips and tricks to reduce textile waste.

Other program initiatives include:

- Four community textile waste and plastic waste avoidance workshops
- A monthly Hub6163 community sewing group in Hamilton Hill
- Quarterly community ‘sewing for less plastic’ workshops to make reusable fabric bunting and produce bags
- Regular clothes swaps at Cockburn Youth Centre
- ‘Free to borrow’ equipment (clothes racks, hangers) through a mobile Waste Education Trailer, to schools, residents, and community groups wanting to host their own clothes swaps
- ‘Free to borrow’ reusable textile bunting and party decorations for Cockburn primary schools to encourage parents and residents to host sustainable and waste free events.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the program was a resounding success.

“It continues to help people of all ages, genders and cultural backgrounds from local schools, community and resident groups, and our youth and seniors centres, gain a better understanding of textile waste and fast fashion,” Mayor Howlett said.



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“Well done to everyone who continues to take action in their own lives to improve waste behaviours and divert textiles and plastic from landfill. You are all leading the way in our community.”

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