

# **Sydney Community Bike Workshop**

**(Formerly “The Nunnery Bike Workshop”)**

## **Draft Service Profile/proposal**

### **What is the Sydney Community Bike Workshop?**

Established in its present incarnation around three years ago, the Sydney Community Bike Workshop is run by a group of volunteer bicycle enthusiasts who wish to promote cycling as a means of transport, make cycling easier and more affordable, and make cycling an enjoyable experience for the whole community. The bike workshop is a grass-roots bicycle recycling, maintenance, and education facility.

The bike workshop is currently located in a private yard, and runs exclusively on donated funds, parts, and tools. The group of dedicated volunteers that keep the workshop running have many different backgrounds. From qualified bike mechanics to community workers, bike couriers, students, and full time professionals, the bike workshop team is diverse and highly skilled, and is always welcoming of new members.

Our primary aim is the facilitation of cycling for the whole community. The most important activity towards this is education - in bicycle maintenance, bicycle safety, and in ways to better enjoy cycling. Knowledge is our principle currency; our volunteers can instruct people on all issues of bicycle repair. We encourage those that have learnt from others at the bike workshop to come back and pass the knowledge on at a later time. As a result there is never any shortage of people who can answer a basic query to do with a repair or on bike comfort, and more complicated requests can be passed on to the experts.

Another significant barrier for many would-be cyclists is the cost of getting in to cycling, whether it be the cost of buying a new bike or of repairing an old bike. We seek to alleviate this for those willing to put in a little extra work. We provide a recycling facility - we accept donations from the wider public, from complete bikes to the most trivial of parts. Newcomers can start new bike projects from scratch, or bring their own bike that is in need of repair and use the wide range of parts we stock free of charge.

A full range of repairs can be performed at the workshop. This can be from the most simple of repairs, the adjustment of a saddle or replacement of a punctured inner-tube, to the most technical of repairs under the guidance of the expert volunteers - just about any bicycle problem can be solved. Our tools and capabilities can match that of a competent bicycle repair shop, and we have the scope to expand our selection of tools to include the fully professional services offered by specialist repair centres.

### **How can I get a bike at the bike workshop?**

Simple! Show up with either a dilapidated hand-me-down bike, or some idea of what kind of bike you'd like to ride, and ask someone for help! You'll rapidly be set up by one of the volunteers with directions of what needs to be done for your project, and specific instructions, tools, and parts to do the job. The job will be broken down in to

easily digestible steps, such that even the complete novice can build an entire bike from scratch within a small number of nights at the workshop. In return for getting you on the road on a smoothly functioning bicycle, we typically ask that you donate something back to the workshop, entirely up to your means and your discretion.

### **How and what can I donate to the bike workshop?**

We accept donations of all kinds. Our most important donation is your time and your knowledge! Most of the people in need of help have the most basic of queries that anyone having attended few nights at the workshop could answer.

We are willing to accept any bike and any component, no matter how broken or trivial it may seem. The workshop works much like a car wrecker's yard – parts can be stripped and whole bikes built out of scrap.

In addition to this there are some things that need to be purchased – lubricants, replacement tools, some safety gear, and the odd washer or ball-bearing. Thus we accept cash donations towards the workshop fund, or donations of specific tools and parts that we require. These requirements will be advertised on the common board or website.

### **Can I buy a bike from the workshop?**

Although it is not a central activity, we will occasionally sell bikes built by volunteers at either the workshop or at community markets. Profits from the sale will go entirely to the workshop fund for tools or parts.

### **When and where and how does the bike workshop run?**

Currently the workshop is run in a private yard at **40 Forbes St., Newtown, 2042**. The workshop is only open on Monday nights from 5 pm until 9 pm. We are proposing to move our workshop in the near future to a site at the Housing NSW garages adjacent to Waterloo Green under the Turanga Building, at **1 Philip St., Waterloo, 2017**.

This will be achieved through a recently developed partnership we have developed with the Factory Community Centre in Waterloo. The Centre has been running for 30 years with wide range of experiences and services benefiting the Waterloo and Redfern community and beyond. Through their initiative, The Factory has recently revitalised a Furniture Recycling Workshop. They have agreed to auspice and support the development of our project as part of its Housing Communities Assistance Programme (HCAP). This is a community development activity, sponsored by Housing NSW which, amongst other aims, seeks to assist local people in developing solutions to local problems thought supporting existing (and developing new) community projects.

Primary contacts for the bike workshop included the HCAP Community Development Worker (Mike Shreenan) on 02 9698 9569, or long standing bike workshop volunteers, James **Nichols** on 0422 684 236, and **Maurice Wells**, on 0433 622 640. Up-to-date information and discussion boards can be found at <http://bikeclub.wordpress.com/>

Sponsorship is at present entirely through private donation, however there are many ways that our operation could be expanded or streamlined. We are open to donations or sponsorships from groups to improve our inventory of tools and workshop fit-outs.

## **What are the benefits of the bike workshop?**

### Social

Leaving aside the social benefits of increasing cycling in the community, the bike club itself is a lively and fun hub of learning and socializing. We empower people of all ages with useful skills in mechanical repair, and with the capability to enjoy free transport.

The workshop is typically attended by people from all walks of life. It's a chance for bike nuts, welfare recipients and social housing residents, downtown professionals and students to mix over the common interest of cycling, or at least the common interest of getting around town on the cheap! Volunteering at the workshop is also a positive experience for people to help others in the community.

### Environment

The wide range of environmental and health benefits of moving towards cycling as a means of transport have often been repeated, and form a core part of the City of Sydney's sustainable future plan. Evidently the bike workshop contributes to this move. Furthermore however, our ideals of reuse and recycling help reduce unnecessary waste going to landfill. Bikes last longer than many people think! Even those bicycle frames that are too far gone to build to a complete bike can be passed on to facilities that can use the tubing and metal for projects such as wheelchair building.

### Economic

The economically disadvantaged are those that benefit the most from our workshop. By providing access to the minimal cost transport that bike provides, direct benefits can be seen to those in need. We essentially eliminate the wider social cost of waste processing in relation to discarded bikes. A very high proportion of our donated bikes are used, those that aren't are stripped and processed for the appropriate recycling centers.

### Training

The workshop provides free training to those that attend and partake. We teach not only specific bicycle repair skills, but also a wider set of mechanical competencies. We provide not only information about sustainable transport, but also wider knowledge of sustainable living. Those that volunteer also gain considerable experience in community work.