

Friday, 19 May 2023

NEW FUNDING PROVIDES FUN FOR GOOD

More families from across the region will have better access to quality toys, games and puzzles when the refurbished Newcastle Toy Library officially re-opens this weekend.

The second and final stage of the project was made possible by a \$40,000 grant from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, which has enabled the Newcastle Toy Library's dedicated team of volunteers to undertake a much-needed upgrade of the facility that will deliver significant benefits to the community.

The works include the installation of custom shelving and storage, modernising its Toy Library and improving access for members and volunteers.

Located at the New Lambton Library, Newcastle Toy Library has played a vital role for more than 40 years in assisting families from all backgrounds with affordable access to quality toys, games and puzzles.

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Chair, Jennifer Leslie, said the funding enabled Newcastle Toy Library to not only improve its facilities, but the overall quality and sustainability of the service.

"With the cost of living on everyone's minds, supporting this project made perfect sense for the Foundation as it provides families access to a fantastic range of toys, games and puzzles for as little as \$35 a year.

"Sustainability is also a big issue across the globe, and with research showing that more than half of all new toys sold in Australia end up in landfill within 12 months, toy libraries make a lot of sense in terms of reducing waste.

"We are delighted to have been involved in this project and are confident even more local families will be able to take advantage of the opportunities the Toy Library provides." Newcastle Toy Library President, Tess Phillips, said they have already received so much positive feedback on their updated space and facilities.

"Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation funding has enabled us to make a significant change to the space the library occupies. We can now securely store and display items and provide much-improved access for members and volunteers," Mrs Phillips said.

"The original setup consisted of old donated furniture and open shelving which required lengthy set-up and pack down by our volunteers, while the overall flow and presentation created access issues for users with a disability and parents with prams.

"As an inclusive service, addressing this was a priority for us so it's extremely gratifying to see it all come together after more than 12 months of hard work."

Mrs Phillips said the upgraded facilities and services will play a key role in better engaging and supporting the community and making the group more financially sustainable.

"While these improvements aim to encourage wider use of the Toy Library by families from across Newcastle, it will also enable us to better engage with local community groups and early childhood service providers," Mrs Phillips said.

“This will include running an occupational therapist-led session exploring the benefits of play for different ability groups to enhance the development of language, cognitive, emotional and social skills of even more local children.

“We are now better placed to grow our membership in the coming months, which will in turn increase our revenue base. This will assist in the continued expansion of our toy collection and improvements to our space.

“We’re also confident the improvements will see us add to our already growing band of volunteers, who are the heart and soul of our organisation and put in countless hours both on-site and behind the scenes.

“We’re so grateful for Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation’s support, not only financially, but also their commitment to the long-term support of the community.”

Since its establishment in 2003, Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation has distributed more than \$25million to 550 projects across regional NSW.

For more on how to volunteer with the Newcastle Toy Library, go to newcastletoylibrary.com.au or email newcastletoylibrary@gmail.com.

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