

Artarmon

www.artarmonprogress.org.au

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GAZETTE

Newsletter of the Artarmon Progress Association

Car Sharing comes to Artarmon By Stuart & Rhoda Sexton

Have you noticed a small blue Toyota car parked in Broughton Road beside Nick Logan's Pharmacy? Have you read the script on the car, or observed its parking space defined by diagonal white lines? The car marks the start of Artarmon's participation in a commercially-based car sharing scheme, and is available for use by anyone who joins the scheme marketed by GoGet Car Share Australia. The car is located two minutes from Artarmon Station, and an easy walk from the bicycle lockers adjacent to the station and Artarmon Library.

Car sharing offers the freedom of having a car without the hassles of ownership such as capital cost and depreciation, maintenance, insurance and repairs. It is a low-cost, reliable and convenient alternative to car ownership, or using taxis or rental cars, and is operated by a number of companies in more than 600 cities worldwide. Car share schemes provide vehicles in specially marked parking spots (called "pods"), where cars are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

GoGet Car Share has arranged with Willoughby City Council to provide cars at the following locations:-

- Broughton Rd, Artarmon
- Herbert St, St Leonards
- Railway Street, Chatswood
- Thomas Street car park, Chatswood
- Albert Ave/Archer St car park, Chatswood.

The second pod in Herbert St, St. Leonards has been approved and is soon to be implemented. Council views the scheme as being of benefit to the community and at present provides the parking spaces free of charge. Council is keen to promote car sharing as a way to reduce car ownership in Artarmon, Chatswood, St Leonards, Willoughby and elsewhere within the Council boundaries. Pod locations are requested by the car share company according to demand received from its customers, and Council considers and approves appropriate locations. Council is open to providing more pods if the demand is proven. GoGet Car Share collects statistics on car usage and reviews the locations and numbers of vehicles accordingly. As the

Artarmon pod has only been in use since July 2008, it is too early to tell if more pods and vehicles will be needed in the suburb. So far about 15 or 20 Artarmon residents are members of the scheme. Willoughby Council is a corporate member, allowing staff to use cars for Council business. Some commercial enterprises in Chatswood also make use of the service.

GoGet Car Share offers two levels of membership - GoFrequent (\$30/month) for regular users (typically more than once a week), and GoOccasional (\$15/month) for less frequent use. Joining costs include a \$25 application fee and a \$500 refundable security deposit. Usage charges are per hour or per kilometre for short-term use, while daily rates apply for longer use, and each member receives a key card to access the cars. Petrol, insurance, maintenance and cleaning are covered by the membership fee, although it is the user's responsibility to leave the car with at least ¼ tank of fuel and in a clean state. Fuel cards are provided with the car for major petrol outlets.

The car based in Artarmon is a Toyota Yaris hatchback (automatic, airconditioned, with child restraint anchor points), seating up to four people. Larger sedans and utilities are available by request. Bookings may be made by phone or via the internet, for a minimum of one hour, and the car must be returned to the location where the trip began within the booked period. Users can be fined by GoGet for not returning cars on time! At the end of each month, members receive an itemised account of their usage.

The Council is receptive to ideas to expand car share usage. Sydney City Council has three car share companies operating within its boundaries, and several suburban councils are also using car share services.



Councillor Barry Thompson deciding whether to take the share car or the bike

Council is giving consideration to having a pod located in each new large apartment development, making the service very easy to access for high-rise residents. You can read more on the Council website at <http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/>, under the Traffic and Transport section (GoGet Car Share).

In 2004, the Australian Government released a comprehensive study on car sharing around the world and considerations for implementing commercial car share schemes in Australia. This report includes discussions of benefits, criteria for success, and some history of car share usage overseas, where organised programs have been in operation in USA and Europe for up to 30 years. You can find the report at <http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/transport/publications/pubs/carsharing-dec04.pdf> or search for "Car Sharing Report" on the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website.

Will the car share concept take off in Artarmon? It is very popular in highly urbanised cities overseas; Willoughby Council is keen for the scheme to succeed, but whether it will be commercially viable in an Australian suburban environment like Artarmon is still an open question. From a sustainability perspective, it is a very promising way to reduce local traffic and parking issues, and help minimise car ownership costs for residents who can give up one or more of their multiple cars within a household. ■

Christmas Celebration - Sunday 30 November 2008 6pm - 9pm
Artarmon Bowling Club Burra Road, Artarmon. Invitation on page 2