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CLUG 2024 LEGO Ambassador's Report

Authors: Steven Whittaker · Updated: 29 Jul 2026

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As the LEGO Ambassador for the Canberra LEGO User Group (CLUG), I'm excited to share our end-of-year report, covering our activities and achievements from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. This period has been full of creativity, community engagement, and significant contributions that have promoted the LEGO hobby and supported various causes.

1. Events and Activities

1. Major Events:
    - *BRICKS @ The Woden School*: BRICKS @ The Woden School was a fantastic success this year, benefiting both our LUG and the wider community. We saw a surge in exhibitors, with numbers returning to pre-COVID levels, and even had to find extra tables to accommodate everyone. This event featured a wonderful variety of LEGO creations, including MOCs from our KFOL and TFOL members, such as Jumanji, Marvel, and Gabby's Treehouse. Our collaborative 'Micropolis' and 'Canberra' themed MOCs made a return and were a hit with attendees. A standout feature was the large train display in the school gymnasium, complemented by farm scenes and a custom 'Hammerbarn' MOC inspired by the TV show Bluey. The event raised over $20,800 for the school, showcasing the collective effort and dedication of CLUG members.
    - *Canberra Brick Show 2023*: The Canberra Brick Show 2023 was the largest LEGO fan event in Canberra and NSW in terms of exhibits, exhibitors, and visitors. We welcomed over 5,700 visitors, marking a 15% increase from the previous year. It was a joy to see our community come together as Adult Fans of LEGO (AFOLs), socialise, and display their impressive creations. The venue provided a relaxed atmosphere with plenty of space for the 168 exhibitors and their exhibits. Special thanks to LEGO Australia for their generous support, providing LEGO Life magazines and polybags for children throughout the weekend. We're already looking forward to next year's event and the new possibilities it brings.
2. Contributions to Larger Shows:
    - *Brickvention (January 2024, Melbourne)*: Some of our CLUG members made the long journey down to Brickvention, one of Australia's largest LEGO fan conventions. Their participation and creativity added great value to the event.

- *Brixpo (July 2023, Adelaide)*: In July, CLUG members travelled to Adelaide for Brixpo. Their involvement was well received and showcased the talent and enthusiasm within our group.
- *BrickBuilt Sydney (May 2024, Sydney)*: Our presence at BrickBuilt Sydney in May 2024 was another highlight. CLUG members displayed their creations and engaged with the broader LEGO community, representing our LUG with pride.
- *BBX (September 2023, Brisbane)*: In September, CLUG members took part in BBX in Brisbane. Their exhibits and participation were highly appreciated, adding diversity and creativity to the event.

We are immensely grateful to all our CLUG members who represented us at these events, showcasing their talent and dedication.

2. Community Engagement

Throughout the year, CLUG has remained committed to community engagement, fostering inclusivity and support. We collaborated with various local organisations and participated in charity events, reinforcing our dedication to giving back. Notable collaborations included:

- Roundabout Canberra: We continued our support for Roundabout Canberra, providing essential resources and raising awareness for their cause.
- ACT Scouts: CLUG worked with ACT Scouts, engaging young minds in creative LEGO building and inspiring the next generation of LEGO enthusiasts.
- Canberra Specialist Schools: We extended our support to four local Canberra Specialist Schools, helping create enriching experiences for their students through LEGO.

3. Support from LEGO

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support we receive from LEGO, which significantly enhances our ability to deliver engaging events and activities:

- *LUG Support*: Twice a year, LEGO provides us with sets that we use to support our events, displays, and community outreach initiatives. This generous support helps us maintain a high standard of creativity and engagement.
- *LUGBULK*: Through the LUGBULK program, CLUG members have the opportunity to purchase LEGO elements in bulk once a year. This program allows our members to access a wide variety of parts at a reduced cost, fostering creativity and enabling more ambitious builds and projects.

4. LEGO Store Sydney Opening

In addition to our events, I had the privilege of attending the opening of the new LEGO store in Sydney on November 14, 2023. The LEGO Group, in partnership with Alquemie Group, unveiled the world's largest LEGO store at Sydney Arcade, overlooking Pitt Street Mall. The 900 sqm store spans two levels and features several unique attractions:

- *LEGO Minifigure Factory*: The first of its kind in Australia, allowing customers to create and customise their own LEGO Minifigure.
- *Custom Built Models*: The store includes large format brick features inspired by local icons, such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Opera House Mosaic, and a Rainbow Gum Tree, all meticulously constructed with thousands of LEGO bricks.
- *Interactive Experiences*: The store offers a storytelling table, a Pick and Build Wall, hands-on play opportunities, and monthly in-store events.
- *Brick Specialists*: Dedicated staff are available to help visitors find the perfect LEGO set.

Troy Taylor, Vice President and General Manager of LEGO Australia and New Zealand, and Richard Facioni, Executive Chairman of Alquemie Group, highlighted the store's immersive features and its mission to inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow. This new landmark is set to create special memories for LEGO fans of all ages.

5. Conclusion

The past year has been incredibly successful for CLUG, marked by vibrant events, strong community engagement, and significant contributions to the broader LEGO community. The dedication and enthusiasm of our members have been instrumental in achieving these milestones. As we look forward to the coming year, we aim to continue building on this momentum, fostering creativity, and making a positive impact through the joy of LEGO.

Thank you to all our members, exhibitors, and supporters for their unwavering commitment and passion. Together, we have made a difference and will continue to inspire and connect through our shared love for LEGO.

Steven Whittaker
LEGO Ambassador
Canberra LEGO User Group