



## How To Trade

### **It's not barter**

In LETS we do not exchange goods and services directly. Instead we buy them using our own currency. In Central Coast LETS the currency is called Shells. So when we put a price on our Offers or buy something, the price is stated in Shells instead of in dollars.

You don't need to sell something of equal value to what you buy because we use a "local" currency instead of barter; you buy things in the same way you would buy them in a shop. That is, you ask the price of what you want and you pay in Shells and take away what you bought.

You do not have to offer something worth 20 Shells if you buy something worth 20 Shells.

### **You don't need to sell before you buy**

A few people who join LETS never trade because they believe they have to sell something before they can buy something. This is not true. As soon as you buy something you simply go into what we call "commitment". Your balance goes up and down as you buy and sell.

I made my first trade as a buyer at a Trade Day. I bought something for 12 Shells. A few weeks later I made my first trade as seller when I sold something for 10 Shells. At the next Trade Day I bought things for around 20 Shells and sold nothing that day. The next month I sold 3 things. Since I joined LETS a year ago, I have made over 60 trades. Another person who joined when I did has never bought anything and has made less than 10 trades.

You can buy something as soon as you join Central Coast LETS. Some people join at a Trade Day and start trading as soon as they have paid their fees and completed the paperwork.

Even if you didn't join at a Trade Day you can start trading today. Go to the website ([www.centralcoastlets.org](http://www.centralcoastlets.org)), log in with your member number and the password issued to you by email. List your Wants and look at the Offers. The instructions for how to list and trade via the website are on the website.

## **What are Wants?**

Wants are, quite literally, what members want to buy.

An example of a trade made recently:

I wanted a rear rack for my bicycle. I logged into the Central Coast LETS website and listed my Want for a bicycle rack in the Wants section of the website. I listed the rack as "rear rack for bike, sturdy rear rack wanted, must fit 26 inch bicycle, phone Anne on ...". For several weeks nothing happened and no-one rang. Then at a Trade Day a member asked if I still wanted that bike rack. He had seen my listing in the Wants and remembered he had a spare bike rack in his shed. A few days later he dropped the rack round to my house, I checked that it fitted my bike and paid for it in Shells. Another successful trade.

## **Come to the Trade Days and see how it's done**

At Trade Days you will meet members and discover how social LETS is and see what sort of goods and services are traded at Trade Days.

We're accustomed to getting new members and we will show you the ropes. Just say "hi, this is my first Trade Day" and members will show you how to trade and introduce you to other members. It's a very social atmosphere and you can bring your children.

Trade Days are sometimes held in members' backyards so you can find the address in your street directory and when you get there look for the Central Coast LETS sign and the cars parked outside. Park your car nearby and bring in your stall if you've got one, or just yourself if you haven't got a stall.

## **A typical Trade Day**

The stalls are usually set up round the fence or walls. Most stalls are just small folding tables with goods stacked on them. People who don't have a folding table bring a clothes rack to hang their goods from or lay out a blanket as their stall.

Some stall-holders stay at their stall to answer questions about their goods or services, some put price stickers on everything and wander off

to socialise. If you have any questions about the goods or services on offer, ask someone to point the stall-holder out to you.

You don't have to buy anything on your first Trade Day but it's a good way to meet members and to learn how to trade.

### **Your first Trade Day**

You don't need to trade on your first Trade Day though if you have something ready by all means bring it. Bring a small table to put it on or a clothes rack or even a blanket to spread on the grass or floor.

Some people make a small sign from a sheet of cardboard, one or two people have small painted signs and some people have no sign.

### **What to trade**

Goods that are always popular at Trade Days are foods you have made yourself, children's clothes and books, fresh vegetables, fruit and herbs, homemade hand lotions and seasonal items like hand-knitted scarves and seedlings.

If you can't bring any of these things, have a look in your spare room or shed for something you don't need any more but is still good. Bring it along and put it on your stall.

### **Trading services**

Not everyone trades goods. Some members trade services. Services currently on offer include childcare, pick-ups and deliveries, rug making classes, yoga classes, home maintenance, psychic readings, Past Life Regressions, budgeting advice, and more.

When a member begins trading services they often have a flier or business card to hand out. These are often paper ones made up on a home computer or a photocopier. You are not expected to go to enormous expense to advertise your services or goods.

Services are also listed for free in the Offers section on the Central Coast LETS website. You can list your services there yourself and look up other members' Offers of goods and services.

(If you don't have the internet at home or don't know how to use it, contact Korina Ivatt – korina@centralcoastlets.org or 4342 5079)

### **What if I don't get any trade at Trade Day?**

That would be unusual. But if it happens, just bring something different next time. For example, if you brought stew to trade in Summer and no-one bought any, bring Summer food or some other goods next time.

Items such as bicycles or small items of furniture might not sell at a Trade Day the first time. List them in the Offers on the website or bring them again next Trade Day. Even if no-one buys what you have, word will get round and you may get a trade that way. For example, if you have a child's bicycle to trade and no-one buys it at Trade Day, someone will see it and tell another member who was not there about a bicycle just the right size for their child and they will probably ring you up.

If something is very big or heavy or you can't transport it, bring a photograph of it and list it in the Offers section of the website. If you need the buyer to pick it up, say so in your Offer. Some members have trailers and vans and offer pick-ups and deliveries to trade and the buyer will arrange that themselves.

### **What if I list my offers on the website and no-one ever trades with me?**

Change your listing. Make it more descriptive and add your phone number. (Your phone number and address on the website are visible only to members logged in to the website.)

For example, instead of listing a bike rack you are Offering as "bike rack" list it as "bike rack, no rust, fit 20-26 inch bicycle, phone Bob 4321 1234 weekends or come to November Trade Day".

Come to the next Trade Day and introduce yourself. Once people get to know you they are more likely to trade with you and you will get to know which members want to buy what you are Offering.

Once your goods on offer are sold, take the listing off the website so people know it's sold and don't keep ringing you up asking about it.

## **Changing what you Offer**

It's easy. Just remove your old offer from the offers section on the website and from your flier or stall. Replace it with your new Offer or Offers on the website and tell members about the change at Trade Days. Handing out a flier or telling people at Trade Days helps speed trade when you make a change to your offers.

## **Why do some people get lots of trade and some people get hardly any?**

People who go to Trade Days get more trade. People who buy regularly also get more trade. Once you become known personally rather than as just a listing on the website, people will trade with you a lot more.

Let's look at what you are offering.

Is it seasonal? If so, sell it at the beginning of the appropriate season. Hand-knitted scarves are very popular in Autumn but not very popular in Summer.

## **But I don't know what to offer for trade!**

That's okay. Start with food, plants or children's clothing. They are always welcome! Excess fruit from your orange or lemon tree will go quickly, so will jams and spreads, soups and sauces and herbs. Seedlings and potted plants will also go quickly. We have lots of members with growing children so children's clothing is always needed.

## **Here are some of the goods and services on Offer at the time of writing:**

(It's okay to trade the same skill or service as another member, in fact it is great as it gives more options to members.)

Fresh herbs

Massage

Furniture renovation

Children's clothes  
Typing  
Cleaning  
Childcare  
Pick-ups and deliveries  
Artists' model  
Rug making classes  
Home maintenance  
Psychic readings  
Past Life Regressions  
Firewood  
Pet minding  
Blundstone boots  
Budgeting advice  
Home care  
Tree lopping  
Plumbing  
House-sitting  
Sewing