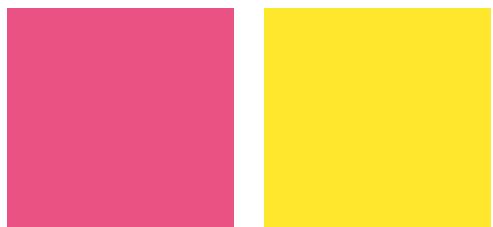
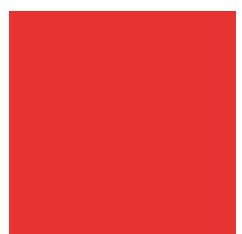


## Annual Report

July 2018 – June 2019



# 2018/2019 figures



**248,280kg**

diverted from landfill

**60,000**

customers served



**15,694**

participants in  
education programs



**17,899km**

travelled to collect donations  
and deliver reuse resources

**\$1,144,419**

to run  
Reverse Garbage



**9,672**

volunteer hours  
per year

## Board report

Yvette Andrews, Chairperson

**I am delighted to present members and supporters of Reverse Garbage with our Annual Report, outlining some of the highlights of the 2018/2019 financial year.**



There are many people who contribute to the successful work of Reverse Garbage, our staff, our volunteers and the members of our community who shop at Reverse Garbage and use our education services out of a commitment to reuse, reduce waste and live sustainably.

Reverse Garbage was started by educators and visionaries in 1974 and we carry their extraordinary foresight with us as we strive to do more each year. We are indeed an Inner West institution.

This year, for the first time we have a full year of data on the amount of material saved by Reverse Garbage from landfill. The Zero Waste Network project has enabled Louise McDonald and the Operations Team to accurately and efficiently measure their work and we can now substantiate our impact as

## **248,280kgs per year of resources saved.**

Kirsten Junor and her Retail Team have served more than 60,000 customers during the year who utilise industrial and commercial discards that have been curated for their creative reuse. One of the biggest days this year was a specialist vintage fabric day, with materials that had been squirreled away for a special event.

## **More than 15,694 children and adults have taken part in the creative reuse education program**

delivered by Brett Lyon and our Education Team in classrooms, shopping centres, festivals and community centres as well as here in our Education Room.

Reverse Garbage has continued to sponsor an astonishing range of local groups including Inner West Boomerang Bags. The details of those activities are in the full annual report which follows.

Financially, we are reporting a result that is significantly better than last year, a net surplus of \$54,805. This has been achieved through the leadership of our CEO,

Naomi Brennan working with staff to set targets for every part of the business and continuing to maintain a tight hold on expenditure.

As we have done better, we chose to invest in a much needed new truck to replace our old second hand truck. Also in late 2018, we purchased a modest paper and cardboard recycling social enterprise that helps keep our truck fully utilised throughout the week and ensure that small companies are effectively recycling their paper waste.

We were also able to purchase a van for our education program, thanks to grant funds awarded by Summer Hill's MP, Jo Haylen via NSW Government's Community Building Partnership.

All of this has been achieved in challenging circumstances as we vacated the rear section of our warehouse as the floor required urgent repairs in February 2018. A third of the warehouse was unusable for the entire financial year with no clear plan to fix this space from the Addison Road Community Centre management.

Our significant challenge remains the ongoing uncertainty of Reverse Garbage's future in our current accommodation at the Addison Road Community Centre. All I can say is that this issue continues to occupy the board and staff as we work hard to seek a satisfactory resolution.

It may well be that we will need to seek the assistance of our community and in particular, call on our members and supporters within the community and our followers on social media to help. As always, we are so grateful for your commitment and support. You will be the first to know what we need and how you can help Reverse Garbage.

Finally, I'd like to thank my colleagues on the board. Each director on the board is a committed enthusiast for Reverse Garbage. They freely offer their time and a depth of expertise to help us navigate our path. It is a pleasure to work with such a talented group of people who have the interests of the organisation at heart.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff, I'm delighted to present this year's report which provides highlights and insights from 2018/2019.

## CEO report

Naomi Brennan, CEO

# We have made significant inroads toward our 2018/2019 objective of building a robust, sustainable organisation equipped to thrive and prosper...but it has not been without challenges.



In this context, by 'sustainable' we mean strong, secure and solid, able to navigate ups and downs, but poised for growth. To achieve this, we have had to make a few well considered purchases. For a team who are committed to choosing to reuse, it was quite exciting to have new computers, new vehicles and a new pallet jack scale.

**Our dedicated education van has been made possible by \$35,000 in grant funds through the 2018 Community Building Partnership grants offered by Jo Haylen MP, Member for Summer Hill.**

We are very grateful to Jo and to our community who wrote letters of support and voted for us.

Again, our community supported us in the purchase of our new truck. By donating a dollar or two when purchasing, they raised \$14,253 as at June 2019, which made it possible for us to buy our new truck. Our customers appreciate that without a reliable truck, we can't collect all the amazing resources found here.

The pallet jack scale has enabled us to accurately quantify the materials we divert from landfill for the first time ever! In 2018/2019, we saved an impressive 248,280kgs.

While the majority of our customers appreciate the environmental benefits we offer, we do still encounter some who question our pricing given everything is donated to us. Our prices, quite simply, are based on the reuse value of the item. And these prices keep this not for profit, self-funded charity alive.

**In 2018/2019, our total operating revenue was \$1,144,419.**

Just like every other business, we pay significant rent, bank fees, electricity, water, phones, vehicle costs, wages, waste management and insurance (which has been handy this year with two break-ins).

Our biggest challenge continues to be our building. The roof sprouts more leaks each year, which of course further damages our old timber floor and our stock. We are yet to return to the third of our warehouse floor that was closed in February 2018. Yet, in true RG style, the magic continues.



You'll read more about this in each of the detailed reports provided by each of our core teams:

- Retail led by Kirsten Junor
- Education led by Brett Lyon
- Operations led by Louise McDonald.

I would like to thank every member of our team for all that they do. They work in a less than ideal environment, yet continue to find creative solutions to maximise results from minimal resources. Each one of them brings different skills, experiences and views to the table and that is what makes Reverse Garbage the wonderland that it is.

Reverse Garbage is grateful for the tremendous amount of assistance we receive from volunteers, averaging 186 hours per week.

Not tallied in those hours, is all of the time volunteered by our highly skilled and committed board of directors. We are fortunate to have a team who are knowledgeable of the organisation's past, while focussed on its future. I can't overstate the assistance that has been offered to the organisation from Chair, Yvette Andrews and all of our directors. To ensure success, every not profit organisation needs access to a great think tank, and our board of directors is more than up to that challenge.

Finally, thank you to our diverse and wonderful Reverse Garbage community - the artists, creators, educators, students, tinkerers, handy persons, hobbyists. To the general protectors of Reverse Garbage and all we stand for, we really could not do any of the things we do, without you.



## Retail report

Kirsten Junor, Creative Director

**As I write my fifth annual report, I can say that no two days here have ever been the same – and never will be. And we wouldn't want it any other way. All we need to thrive is a good mix of the usual unusual and the unwavering support of our wonderful community.**



As the frontline ambassadors of our brand, our retail team welcome on average

**5000 customers to our 100-year-old warehouse each month.**

They are a font of knowledge, offering advice on how to solve creative challenges using reuse resources, tips on the best glue, how to sew, crochet, craft, upcycle, you name it. And not only do they need to be experts in the value of reuse, they need to be experts in real life Tetris – rearranging and displaying continuously arriving stock.

We take pride in curating our selection of unique resources for our diverse community. It is no accident

that the unusual, interesting, and sometimes bizarre, are balanced by the basic, practical, and normal.

Every day we receive countless offers of donations. We always ask for photos so we can be sure we understand exactly what is being offered (a photo changed 1000 hammers to helmets!) and the condition is acceptable for reuse. We only accept donations that we know our customers can reuse, but always offer suggestions on alternative methods of passing items on.

Our commercial and industrial donors see the environmental value of keeping their discarded items out of landfill and appreciate that Reverse Garbage is often their only avenue.

In an effort to make it easier for one of our key customer groups, educators, to access our reuse resources, we trialled a subscription service for early learning centres in July and October 2018. We expanded this by offering our resources online to all educators and teachers across the state. While the results were encouraging, with our current resources and space challenges we have had to put it on hold for now.

Through the UTS Shopfront program in late 2018 we worked with a team of design students to review our brand, develop some brochure templates and create some animations. The quality of their work earned them a High Distinction, but we think seeing the work used in 'real life' was even more rewarding.



New connections have led to new opportunities to spread the reuse messages and meet like-minded people. Being invited to have a booth at TEDx Sydney was a great opportunity not only to talk to a different market, but to show how a display can be 100% reuse. This is where we met the sustainably conscious staff from Gateway Bank and discovered a synergy between the two organisations with both starting in the 70s as member-based organisations. Gateway's message about thrift is a new angle as they now add reuse and sustainability to their messaging. Thank you to the volunteers from Gateway who helped us make light work of rearranging our shop area.



We held a special one day 'Vintage Sale' in March which was a huge success. With the range of fabric we receive and a couple of amazing large donations we were able to curate a fabulous event that attracted a huge crowd of savvy fabric enthusiasts and vintage collectors. It was an amazing day all made possible with the help of wonderful volunteers and staff.



First time opportunities for Reverse Garbage included us being interviewed for Better Homes and Gardens' podcast, creating a hoarding to educate about reuse at our local shopping centre, and being filmed for ABC's Catalyst program.

Thanks to the retail team Fiona, Lisa, Amy, Ella, Sarah and Kim, who all know this warehouse and community like no others and work in sometimes trying conditions to make RG the truly unique place it continues to be. And to Leah who keeps the community up to date on our activities through all of our communication channels.



#### WOULD YOU BELIEVE? THIS YEAR WE SOLD:

<b>4853</b> zippers	<b>518</b> mannequin parts
<b>5690</b> coffee sacks	<b>541</b> packs of 50 corks
<b>2032</b> fill-a-bags	<b>4137</b> cardboard thread cones
<b>546</b> craft packs	<b>1057</b> CDs

## Education report

Brett Lyon, Manager, Education Programs and Professional Development

**As the authorities declare a climate emergency, education is key to activating change. We take our role in sustainability education seriously – from age 2 to 92. A review of our Education Programs model in early 2019 identified several opportunities for change.**



### Our people

Given the unpredictable nature of bookings month to month, we determined a casual workforce was the best model for Reverse Garbage, our clients and the staff.

By recruiting a casual pool of staff with a range of skills and qualifications we can now better match the educator to the requirements of the booking, eg. early childhood educator, science expert, artist, designer, vacation care educator, or professional development facilitator. It also allows us to be agile enough to broaden our scope whenever opportunities arise.

With increasing competition in sustainability education, it is important that Reverse Garbage's 45 years of educating the community is supported by qualified

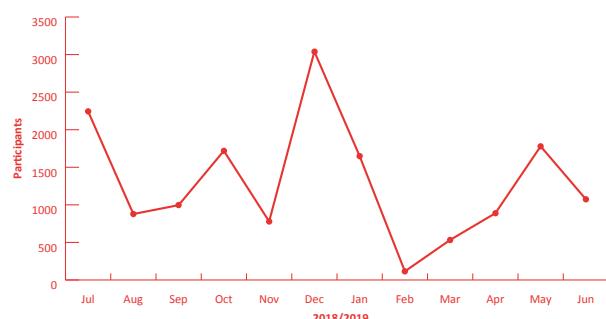
professionals and experts who understand the curriculum, as well as talented artists and creatives who can facilitate workshops, programs and installations that transform ideas to reality.

Education has joined the Retail and Operations teams in hosting people completing Community Service Orders and Work Development Orders. Having regular access to volunteers for approximately 2.5 days a week to sort and prepare materials for our programs has been very helpful, and substantially reduced our labour costs.

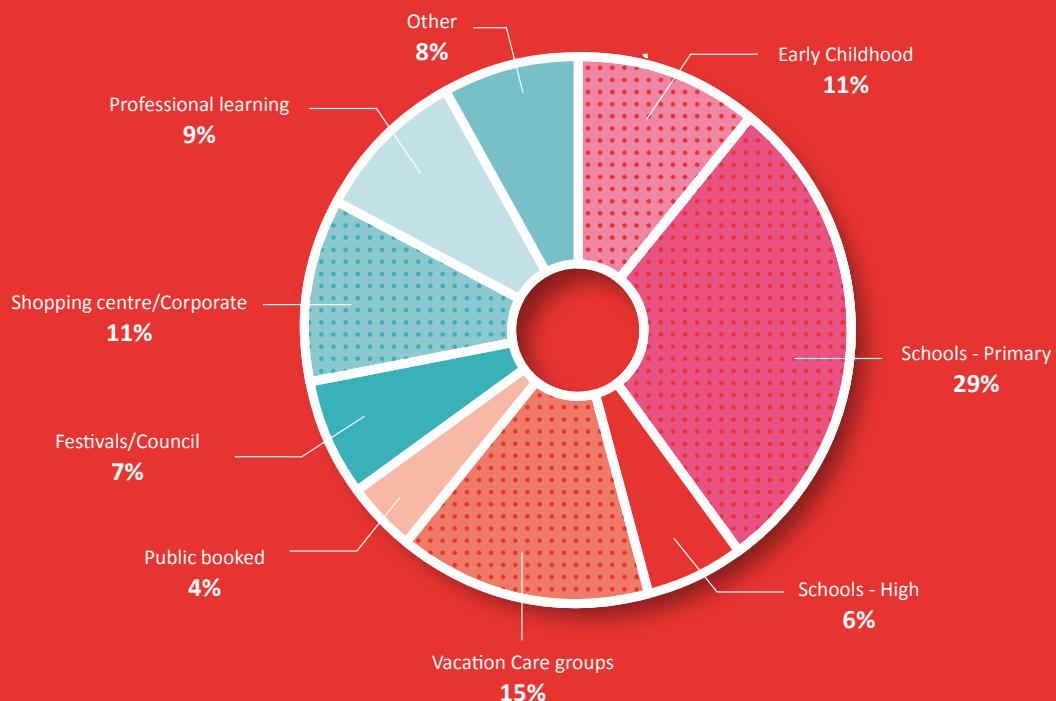
### Our reach

**During 2018/2019, we ran 257 workshops, taking the reuse message to close to 16,000 people.**

### WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS BY MONTH



## WORKSHOPS BY TYPE



While there is still enormous potential within our traditional markets of early childhood and the school sector, we have been exploring new markets since January 2019.

### Higher education (Universities):

- Bookings from Sydney University and UTS.
- 40 students from Hong Kong university on a two-week exchange program provided excellent feedback.

### Seniors groups (Community):

- Seniors groups visited for workshops.

### Public workshops:

- Birthday parties are slowly growing.
- Adult workshop programs have been reintroduced and could develop well.
- School holiday workshops recommenced in January 2019 and have been well received. Tinkering for kids has been particularly exciting with equal numbers of girls and boys learning to use tools to explore e-waste.

### New products

- A new short Professional Development course for pre-service VET Early Childhood educators was developed.

	April	May	June
In April 2019, we started recording conversion rates from enquiry to booking, which gives us valuable feedback on our products and customer service.	80%	100%	92%
We also started tracking the number of new customers, ie. bookings from organisations we have never visited before.	1	7	11





### Our branding

Reverse Garbage's brand recognition is high, however so many people don't know we offer education programs. In an effort to increase the profile of education programs we have started Instagram and Facebook accounts for Reverse Garbage Education, which focus on our range of education offerings. We have also developed a specific education logo, simply by replacing the tag line of the main logo with 'Education Programs'.

This new logo has been applied to a suite of flyers and social media templates to help us promote our professional development programs, educational workshops, school programs, holiday workshops and birthday parties. Positive customer testimonials are included as part of our messaging.

### Ed the van

One of the most exciting things to happen during the year was the arrival of our new education van. With the help of votes and letters of support from our amazing community, Reverse Garbage was successful in obtaining \$35,000 in the 2018 round of the Community Building Partnership grants offered by Jo Haylen MP, Member for Summer Hill.

With our new education van, there's no stopping us from taking our sustainability education program to even more schools across the Inner West and beyond.

### ABC TV's Catalyst

Reverse Garbage was referred to the Catalyst program by Dr Shirley Wyver from Macquarie University for an investigation into Risky Play. We set up a large loose parts play session in a local park in Marrickville, and let the children play. The resulting footage of children and parents at play was aired in late 2019.

Thank you to all members of the Education team, particularly Rachel Rothwell who ran the program for almost three years until December 2018, and Nikki Pitkethley who provides amazing administrative support.





## Operations report

Louise McDonald

# New processes, new vehicles, new personnel. For a role focused on the logistics of handling reuse resources, there's a lot of new items to report in 2018/2019.



### New processes

The most significant development for the year stemmed from our involvement in the Zero Waste Network of Australia's Reuse Impact Measurement Pilot Project. Along with four other reuse centres, we started weighing the donations we received and recording this by material category.

We started weighing goods on the 16 July 2018. At the end of the six-week pilot period, we could see the broader long-term benefits of this data so we purchased the pallet jack scale and incorporated weighing donations into our loading dock processes.

We now have a full year of weights recorded and are proud to report that in 2018/19 we diverted 248,280kg from landfill\*.

**At over one quarter of the resources saved (63,070 kg), plastics is the largest sector.**

This includes:

- unused plastic items due to a change in branding or design
- offcuts, sheets and unusual shapes of acrylic from events and museums
- mannequins
- barrels, buckets and spools
- plastic left over from the manufacturing process
  - when the client takes what they need, we get what's left behind, eg. extrusion plastics and our popular yellow holey strips.

The single largest donation received this year was plastic – 4,736kg of PVC sheeting no longer needed by the manufacturer.

### Textiles comes in second (50,889kg).

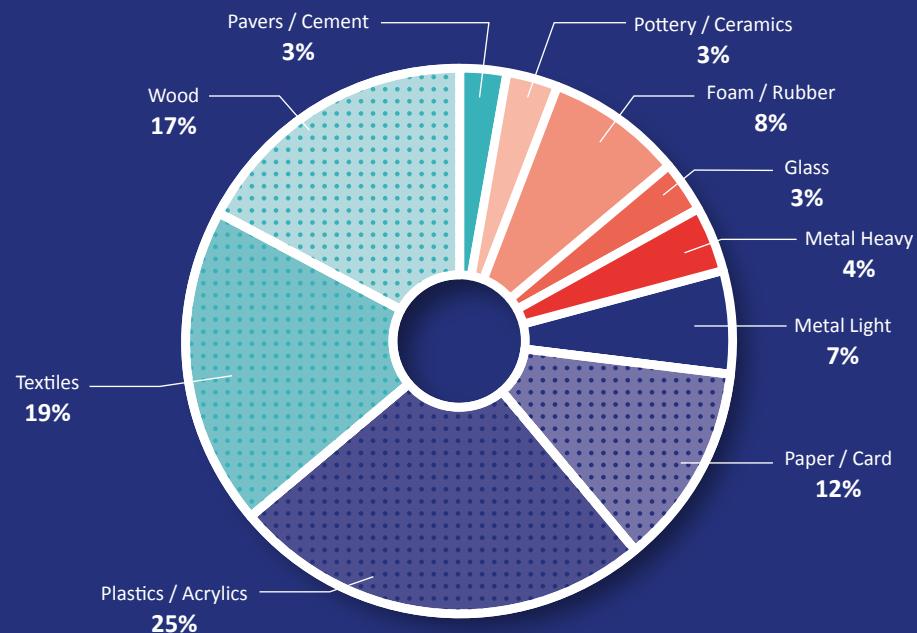
This includes:

- rolls of fabrics from businesses closing down or that are just no longer in vogue
- sample fabric books that become redundant when new lines are released
- donations from deceased estates, or those culling their personal stash.

### The third highest category is wood (43,496kg)

which arrives in the form of solid wood furniture, unused timber, frames and offcuts.

## DONATIONS BY CATEGORY OF MATERIALS



**In 2018/2019 the Operations team completed 2,712 jobs.**

We knew we'd been busy!

'Drop offs' refer to donations delivered to our loading dock by the donor. This includes regular donations from long-term donors, through to one-off donations from film shoots, companies and individuals.

We coordinated 733 pickups from local manufacturers, visual merchandisers, venues such as the Australian Museum, International Convention Centre and major event companies who are increasingly looking for more sustainable ways to manage their resources.

Once the donation arrives at the warehouse, we then tackle the challenge of rearranging the warehouse floor to find a direct spot for it. This has led to us adapting well to the restricted floor space, but we look forward to the day we can return to full capacity.

Recording this data is proving valuable to us and our donors. We are now able to provide donors with a report on the amount of waste they have diverted from landfill (and the money they've saved in waste removal) which always looks good in a board report.

## JOBS COMPLETED

Drop offs  
73%

Pick ups 27%



\*As we commenced weighing donations half way through July, we doubled this figure to provide a 12-month figure.

### DONATIONS ACCEPTED BY MONTH



### New vehicles

As our Reverse Garbage truck was regularly failing us, we had been accepting 'round up' donations at the counter since April 2018 to help us buy a new truck. On 10 May 2019, we traded in our old truck and the Paper Round truck, used our generous customer donations and bought a brand new Hino Truck. We have continued to fundraise to pay off the balance of the truck.

We have also added a dedicated Education Vehicle to our fleet (more in the Education report).

Despite the challenges of unreliable vehicles, we have completed 983 driving tasks covering 17,899kms. More than half of the kilometres (9,124km) were covered by Con at the wheel of the old faithful ute.

### New holes

Our building continues to decay. Every time it rains, new holes appear in the roof which increases damage to stock, and risk to customers and staff.

### New personnel

The Operation Manager role changed hands in February 2019 when Greg Jackson resigned after two and a half years. Having acted in this role while Greg had been on three months leave early in 2018, I was very pleased to be offered the opportunity to lead the team on a permanent basis.

It's a job where we never know what the day will bring – kilometres of artificial turf, a three metre Stonehenge replica or hundreds of bike helmets.

Our longstanding operation team members, Con and Emma work with an ever-changing roster of people working with us to complete Community Service and Work Development Orders to get the job done.

We are grateful to every one of them.





## Community

# We feel the love of our community every day, and it comes in so many different forms. Some contribute time, money, or reuse resources, while others bring treats!

We know that when we need our community's support, they'll be there for us. For example, when The Bower was issued an eviction notice, our community rallied around us just in case. Whether it's this, a letter of support, or community votes, every little bit of support makes our day.

We pay forward all of that support by offering a helping hand where we can to other community groups, whether it be for a one-off event

or ongoing sponsorship. This year we have offered sponsorships to a selection of community groups including:

- Inner West Boomerang Bags
- Queer Life Drawing
- Keentown Project
- TEDx
- Foster Kids
- Club Arncliffe
- Ferncourt Public School P&C
- Lentil as Anything
- Majors Creek Festival
- Pachamama Festival
- Petersham Bowling Club
- Pedal Power
- Sydney Basket Brigade
- Wear Aware
- Inner West Council
- Spectrum Autism Organisation
- Rainbow Families
- Wilkins Public School.



### Christmas stars

We know Christmas is coming when we start seeing George and Helen drop by in search of Christmas decorations. For eight years they've been decorating 32 houses on Gelling Avenue, Strathfield in an effort to make Christmas more about community than commerce. Helen says, "they couldn't do it without Reverse Garbage."



### Reuse heroes

Horrified to see valuable reuse resources going into a skip bin at their children's primary school, Sandra and Belinda dived on in, rescued them and delivered them to us this morning. Look at this loot! Some will end up in another school's classroom, some will become artwork. All of it will now be REUSED.



#### Fundraisers

Hannah comes by almost weekly to buy coffee sacks for the Trolley Bag Project. When she heard we were in a need of a truck, she started fundraising on our behalf.



#### Remote reusers

Some donations even come via the postie.

#### Dumpster divers

Tanya and Simon weren't afraid to dumpster dive to rescue these fabulous powder coated metal pieces that were originally lampshades.



#### Monday men

Every Monday, Rick and Dave drive at least an hour to hunt for treasure here. They tell us it is their treat for the week. They are always proud to show us how they've upcycled our resources. These jackets come from our fabrics!

## Our team

# Employees

We have a small team of 14 who bring Reverse Garbage to life seven days a week – and only three of these are full time.

Our team are as diverse as our reuse resources. Each person brings something different and equally special to the team. They are the heart and soul of this place.



EMMA



FIONA



ELLA



BRETT



CON



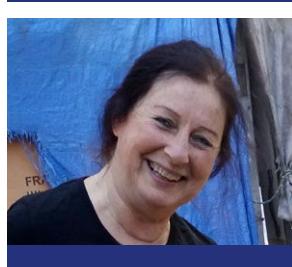
LISA



KIM



LEAH



LOU



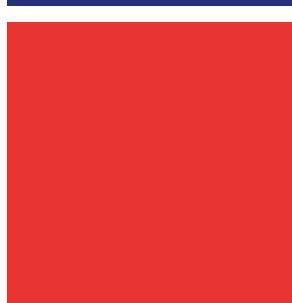
AMY



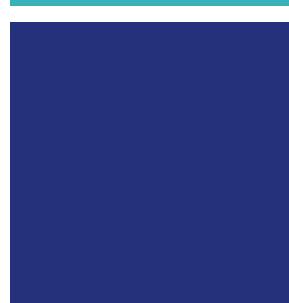
KIRSTEN



NAOMI



SARAH



NIKKI

# Volunteers

As a self-funded, not for profit charity, we rely on volunteers to achieve all that we do. Each week Reverse Garbage benefits from 186 hours of unpaid labour from volunteers and non-paid contributors.

This contribution comes from:

- Community Service Orders via NSW Department of Justice
- Work Development Orders via NSW Department of Revenue
- Work for the Dole program via Australian Department of Human Services
- those with an interest in sustainability and creative reuse
- Duke of Edinburgh students
- university students.

We also run a corporate volunteer program, where groups of up to 8 team members spend the day working together on tasks that are very different to their day jobs. And they love it!

In 2018/2019 groups from AON, Deloitte and Lendlease helps us clean out behind the scenes work rooms, and switch our fill-a-bag and furniture areas around. These are the jobs we wouldn't be able to achieve without our corporate groups.



## Board members

### **Yvette Andrews**

Chairperson

BA Hon (Syd), Masters of Media Arts (UTS), MTeach (UNE)

Yvette a leading engagement professional and is currently the Manager of Strategic Engagement and Community Relations at the City of Sydney. She was previously the Chief of Staff to President of the Legislative Council, Meredith Burgmann and a senior ministerial advisor to Linda Burney. Yvette joined the Reverse Garbage Board in 2009. She lives in the Inner West.

### **Amanda Brown**

Director

BCom (Murdoch), BSc (Murdoch), Chartered Accountant A&NZ

Amanda is a Director at KPMG with over 25 years of experience across offices in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and London. She has led the IT insurance assurance group (2006-2017) and currently is responsible for Quality and Risk for Management Consulting nationally. Amanda has been on the Reverse Garbage Board for four years and has enjoyed the opportunity of working with a long standing, iconic organisation dedicated to sustainability, education and reuse. She lives in the Inner West.

### **Sally Barber**

Director

BEc LLB (Hons) (USyd) FGIA FCIS

Sally is a corporate lawyer with over 20 years of experience, including a dispute resolution background, in-house experience as a General Counsel and a long history of involvement in pro bono programs. Her particular focus is corporate governance, having recently become a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia. She is currently Special Counsel at international law firm Bird & Bird. Sally joined the board of Reverse Garbage in 2018 and is enjoying working with the dedicated team at a much-loved not-for-profit organisation both practising and teaching sustainability and reuse. She lives in the Inner West.

### **Fiona Katauskas**

Director

BA (Hons) ANU

Fiona is a freelance cartoonist, illustrator, author and television producer with over 20 years' experience in a wide range of media roles. Her interests include education, governance, sustainability and community engagement. Fiona has been a member of the Reverse Garbage board since 2010 and has great respect for the organisation, its vision and its history as well as great enthusiasm for its future. She lives in the Inner West.

**Ellen O'Brien**

Director

BSc (USyd), MSc (USyd), MBA (MGSM), CEnvP, MEIANZ, MACD

Ellen is an independent sustainability practitioner who has worked with SMEs, large industrial corporates, NGOs and local governments on eco-efficiency, waste management and sustainability programs. Ellen recently joined the Reverse Garbage Board and she believes that education and communicating sustainability are key for behavioural changes required for us to successfully aid us in managing challenges posed climate change. She lives in the Inner West.

**Scott Brunsdon**

Director

BE-d (USyd)

Scott is a local and long term patron of Reverse Garbage. He has been on the board for four years. Scott began his working life as a secondary school teacher, then spent 20 years in the advertising industry, and now runs a quantity surveying company. He is also a 'maker' and believer in the mission of Reverse Garbage. He lives in the Inner West.

**Phillip Nanlohy**

Director

M.Ed. (USyd), M.Ed. (UOW), B. Ed., Dip. Teach

Phil was one of the group of teachers and community workers who set up Reverse Garbage in 1975. He served as the Chairperson of the original cooperative and on the board for its first 12 years. Phil worked as a teacher and teacher and education lecturer for over 35 years. All during that time he maintained his contact with the cooperative returning to the board in 2016. He lives in the Inner West.

**Anita Mitchell**

Director

MBA (USyd), Company Directors Course AICD, MEM (Macquarie) BSc (UTS)

Anita works in Lend Lease and is a recognised expert in sustainability with 25 years' experience in sustainability and environmental management spanning the energy, water, waste, property and construction sectors. Anita has recently returned from London where she was leading Lend Lease Europe in environment and social sustainability. Anita recently joined the board.

**Vicky Lalwani**

Director

BIT (Bond University); MIT (Bond University);  
MBA Executive (in progress with AGSM, UNSW)

Vicky has been on the Reverse Garbage Board since September 2016 and has found it an amazing opportunity to support a beloved organisation with an ethos to positively support our environment for generations to come. He is currently the General Manager at Adrenalin - a digital marketing, technology and consulting firm.



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