

Annual Report

July 2022–June 2023



Partnerships
and Collaboration



We sold



1,107
National Geographics



1,539 kg
of fabric remnants

8,326
zippers



935
tubs of buttons



1,900
records



2,713
hessian sacks

2,312
pick and mix tubs

433
trophies



119,641 kg
diverted from landfill

31,631
customers served

Almost double
from last year!

11,490
participants reached
by education programs

1,636
picks up and drops off
of donations, travelling

7,460 km

3,082
volunteer hours (Duke of Edinburgh,
Work for the Dole — Centrelink,
Community Service Leichhardt
— in hours, Community Service
Burwood — off site)

Attended 13 festivals

- Warhope Cosplay Festival
- Festival of the Winds
- Sydney Craft Festival
- Marrickville Music Festival
- Inner West Pride Festival
- SECNA
- City of Ryde Australia Day
Community Event
- The Hills Shire Council
Australia Day Community Event
- Fox Studios Family Maker Activity
- Waverly Carols
- Sydney Shimmer Festival
- Central Coast Kids Day Out
- Sydney Science Week

Board report

Ellen O'Brien, Chairperson

Moving forward as we head towards our golden milestone



It has been a year of consolidation for Reverse Garbage at our “new” site in Marrickville. We built and launched our Education Hub facilities on site to enhance our ability to continue to be a creative reuse centre with the aim of helping people to better understand opportunities for repurposing or reusing materials.

This year we have continued our recovery from and management of the impacts of COVID-19 which has had a dramatic effect on our national economy, as well as the public participation in our retail shop and our education- and event-based activities. Gradually our retail and education services have recovered so that we are approaching our pre-COVID level of activity.

The warehouse retail space has been revitalised using a visual-merchandising approach to enhance

the customer experience and we have overhauled our website and established an on-line store where you can find items that are regularly available for sale, as well as one-off specialty items advertised through social media. Reverse Garbage continues to play a key role as an educator in sustainability and in particular the repurposing of materials through reuse and the circular economy in general.

All of our activities are driven by our Strategic Plan 2020–2030, which we reviewed and updated in late 2022. This allows us to continue to focus on our strategic objectives, ensure they remain relevant and look for opportunities to deliver greater outcomes for our organisation and our community.

This year we started a review of our governance which provides us with an opportunity to look at the effectiveness of the organisation, our policies and procedures and identify opportunities to make improvements that will carry us forward as a professionally-operating, not-for-profit co-operative. The review has included analysing the current governance structure and arrangements in the context of our strategic objectives and current operating situation.

The heart of Reverse Garbage is our vision “to be a leader in the circular economy and building community wealth by sharing knowledge to inspire people to live more sustainably”. Driving this vision is

a group of dedicated and skillful staff and volunteers, supported by our volunteer Board. Welcome to new members of our team — Board member Kate Mills, Communications Manager Mel Dominguez and Education Manager Yasmin Andrews and farewell and thanks to Leah Thurecht, Brett Lyon and Lou Macdonald.

We bid a farewell to Yvette Andrews who resigned from the Board of Reverse Garbage after 13 years as a valued and active volunteer member. In 2013, Yvette was nominated as Chairperson of the Board and remained in the position for close to a decade. Her contribution to the organisation was recognised at Inner West Council’s Amy Large Volunteer awards in May, with many of the board members in attendance to celebrate the recognition.

Partnerships are the key to Reverse Garbage being a successful reuse and education centre and where the funds we raise in our retail shop offset the costs of teaching creative reuse to children, adults and community groups. We rely on like-minded organisations and individuals who divert their off-cuts, left-overs and no longer required items from landfill to us. From the weird and wonderful to the practical everyday items, Reverse Garbage acts as the intermediary in giving discarded items another life. This enables us to provide cost-effective items to teachers, schools, creative professionals, crafty people and the general community — you never quite know what you will take home after a visit to Reverse Garbage. (I speak from personal experience!).

The role of volunteers is crucial to the operation of Reverse Garbage. Once again, we thank all of those people who dedicate their time and energy to keeping this organisation functioning efficiently by wrestling with our aging IT system, conducting workshops, helping out in the warehouse and preparing materials for the education sessions.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Honourable Jo Haylen (Member for Summer Hill) who provided financial support for creating our Education Hub.

It is very exciting to announce that Reverse Garbage will be celebrating 50 years of operation throughout 2025. It is a privilege to be involved with such a resilient, creative and innovative organisation that has been at the forefront of encouraging other organisations, businesses and individuals to divert “waste” from landfill. With almost five decades of environmental advocacy and education under our belts, we are looking forward to carrying on the pioneering work of our founders and enhancing our future service offerings to our community.

On behalf of the Board and the staff, I encourage you to read our 2022–23 Annual Report to find out more about what we have been achieving over the last twelve months and to get an idea about what may be happening over the coming year.

CEO report

Kirsten Junor, CEO

What a difference a year makes!



January 22nd this year, marked our first anniversary down here on Carrington Rd, our home that we've been settling into over the past year, which I am pleased to say we are now thriving in. And hasn't the year flown, from still being under a Covid cloud in July '22 to now feeling like Carrington Rd is home. Writing the annual report reminds us all here at RG just how much we've accomplished and what an amazing team effort this always is. This really is just a snapshot of the daily impact our social, environmental and economic impact RG continues to have.

For many years Reverse Garbage has been working within the community, aware that there are similar organisations to RG dedicated to reuse — all of us working solo in a way, busy with the day-to-day of our own goals. Over the past couple of years, we have come to realise that we do have similarities and that in joining forces, we can increase our advocacy and have a greater impact.

Reverse Garbage has been tirelessly advocating for reuse for nearly 50 years, from one warehouse in Marrickville. Over the last few years we have had more opportunities to establish and reestablish partnerships and now through these alliances we are able to amplify our sectors' message of reuse and reinforce the collective impact we have environmentally, socially and economically.

One such important member based partnership has evolved with Charitable Recycling Australia (CRA) — a national network of charitable purpose driven reuse and recycling enterprises. Being a member of CRA enables members to have a larger collective voice to advocate for reuse. It was an offhand chance discussion I had with Omer Soker, CRA's CEO, that led to one of our first events in our new Education spaces. An Immersive Day held here, then onto Salvo's Tempe and King Cotton Punchbowl, for the launch of the newly developed Monash Universities Guidelines for Reuse. It seemed so appropriate that our new spaces, built from so many reuse resources, should be the setting for these important guidelines to be presented. This in turn led to Reverse Garbage being invited to be on a co-design group that met with the NSW EPA to advocate for reuse and its triple bottom line impact. Socially, environmentally and economically. This partnership with CRA and EPA is ongoing and has led to important discussions around language change (more focus on reuse and avoidance, rather than just recycling) and the collection of statewide data that will hopefully lead to policy change within NSW. RG couldn't do this work alone.

And then for the CRA conference held in Sydney last October, we made 150 zipper lanyards! Great conversation starters and highlighting yet again Reverse Garbage is the expert in creative reuse.

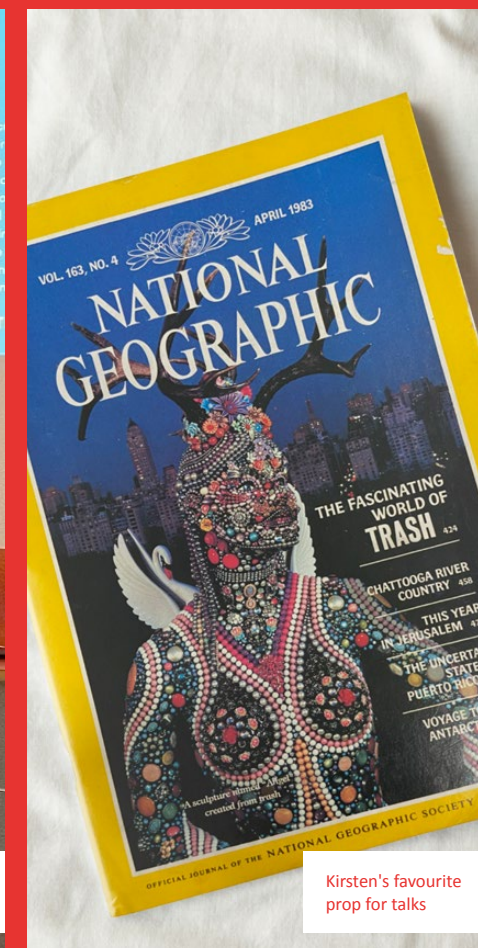
RG has also just become members of SECNA the Social Enterprises Council for New South Wales and the ACT. Their aim is to connect social enterprises and while members may not all be reuse outfits, we all have our social impact in common. Kylie Flament is their new CEO, and in May, Kylie and her team of amazing volunteers organised the first SECNA Festival for Good. It wasn't just good, it was GREAT. I was thrilled to be invited to be part of a panel discussion entitled 'Are we Winning the War on Waste?'. Always a timely discussion — my prop for the day a 1983 National Geographic magazine — sourced from RG — I would say we still have a long way to go but it's encouraging to be among so many passionate people who are working to make this change for good with good.



Kirsten with Omer Soker from CRA



SECNA Social Enterprise Festival 2023



Kirsten's favourite prop for talks

I can't go on a holiday without making a detour to a tip shop or op shop, so when in Hobart last year I reached out to our friend and fellow reusers at the South Hobart Tip shop. I spoke to the team about their role within their own Hobart community and how they go about running such a similar organisation to RG. It is reassuring and frustrating at the same time that while we are all struggling as NFPs with the same issues around resourcing and future organisational stability, you can't help but notice the passion that is underlying all that organisations such as the South Hobart Tip Shop and Reverse Garbage have.

With our new Education spaces up and running it has been wonderful to see the return of school groups of all ages to the warehouse – thank you to Roger, Marcus, Emma and Lou for all the effort that went into creating these inspiring spaces. It wasn't easy as we tried to operate and open to the public while building!

Who doesn't love a celebration! We celebrated a few milestones over the past year and are starting to focus on a really big one in 2025: Our 50th birthday. Our first anniversary arrived before we could say happy anniversary!

While RG may nearly be 50 it's wonderful to have welcomed some new kids on the reuse block to the Inner West over the past year. Thanks to Sara and the team from Among the Trees who helped us with our layout here when we first moved in — and have now just celebrated their first year of saving timber from going to landfill.

We're lucky to have local Members and Councillors that are great supporters of RG. In October last year we welcomed MP Jo Haylen to Carrington Rd to officially open our new to us, made from reuse resources, Education spaces. Having these has enabled us to not only continue our extensive education program but expand it to include more public programs such as eco dying and the Japanese art of Kintsugi or repair.

We are also grateful for the opportunities provided to us to highlight reuse by the Inner West Council. In October 2022 we made many metres of bunting and a floral cake for the Eco Footprints Festival — while it all looked wonderful the weather wasn't all that great but the show went on regardless and was a fabulous celebration of sustainable practice.

It's not often an organisation has the chance to reflect on a first anniversary while looking forward to celebrating its 50th birthday in just over a year. But this report is about the past year and as always with RG much has been achieved and happened.

I'm grateful to everyone that is connected to Reverse Garbage that in turn in some way shape of form helps our wonderful team provide the service and environmental education on a daily basis.

Thank you to Leah for her reuse advocacy and communicating this to our community and partners over the years you were with RG. Thank you also to Brett who left us after 5 years to explore other avenues,

but can't quite leave us and is still casually facilitating education workshops. Welcome to Mel as our Marketing and Communications Manager. Mel brings not only enthusiasm but a wealth of local community connections and hit the ground running developing our first suite of workplace engagement offerings.

Last year our figures were down and while we still have had challenges during the 22/23 year we are encouragingly seeing gradual sustainable growth. We have been finessing our layout and practices across from front to back, internally and externally. The finishing of the Education spaces, working on the flow of the retail space, constructing a shady workspace for staff and volunteers in the receiving area, are just a few of the projects we have accomplished over the past year — and as always keeping our doors open and as much out of landfill as possible.

For many years I've had the vision of an online shop but having the vision is one thing and making it a reality is another. It's again about partnerships and here is where the dynamic duo of Bea, our tenacious Project Co-ordinator and Vicky, volunteer board member and programming guru, worked their magic. Thanks to many hours of work from these two, RG customers now have the pleasure of shopping reuse resources 24/7 Australia-wide!

We didn't officially launch the Education spaces till October last year so our numbers for workshops on site for the first half of 22/23 had been low but we were able to balance this with offsite visits to early childhood centres and schools seeing growth. Good news for our advocacy in these settings as well as contributing to our bottom line.

To all our partners that you will read about in this report thank you for your continuing support. Whether it's volunteering once a week, or workplace team volunteering we couldn't manage all we do without you. Thanks to all our material donors — donations large and small, regular or one-off they all are kept out of landfill a bit longer and contribute in no small way to making RG the destination for the... well you don't know till you visit. If we don't have it you don't need it!

Thank you to our dedicated RG board who volunteer their time and provide support to myself and the organisation. Everything from wonderful cartoons, a historical perspective of RG and strategic advice.

Thanks to Bird and Bird for their ongoing support.

And to the RG team — thank you. What you have achieved and helped to create in the past year is nothing short of amazing. Collectively you have all contributed to ensuring Reverse Garbage will continue its environmental mission and still hold a special place in so many people's hearts for years to come.



Immersive Day 2022
ReuseEvent



Kirsten and Emma
accepting the Community
Recognition Certificate
from Jo Haylen, Member
for Summer Hill



Our 'welcome' cog
wall continues to
grow organically

Retail report

Emma Roberts, Retail Manager

Now that we have settled into our new space and surroundings, we can start to plant our roots



This meant reevaluating the retail space to maximise every nook and cranny within the warehouse, as space would always be the challenge.

While reassessing the floor layout and appropriate fixturing, I enlisted some help from a group of TAFE students who were completing their Diploma in Visual Merchandising. The students were given a brief with guidelines and specifics, which included sustainable practices and of course, choosing to reuse whenever possible! The students visited the warehouse to observe the day-to-day operations, the donation process and our challenges. I wanted to present the group with an authentic scenario, so they would gain that industry experience, which is so crucial when you are learning a trade.

The students presented their proposal to Kirsten and myself and we were extremely impressed with their ideas, and discussed how we could incorporate a few back in the warehouse. So, a big thank-you to the Ultimo TAFE students and head teachers, Nikki Stewart and Kerri Little, for allowing this opportunity to develop.

“

Our Visual Merchandising Diploma students immensely enjoyed collaborating with Reverse Garbage on this retail project as it gave them a perfect opportunity to flex their newly acquired skills!

Through visiting RG and discussing the opportunities and challenges that the crew at RG faced day to day, they were able to observe the challenges with their own eyes. The students loved this opportunity as it gave them a real life brief to work on, use their creativity to discover possible sustainable solutions and were required to think 'outside the box'.

My students were highly motivated with the RG project and looked forward to sharing and coming up with different ideas every class that could assist with the day-to-day running of the retail store.

Our students were required to 'pitch' their ideas to Kirsten & Emma and get feedback on their approach, ideas and solutions. What an invaluable experience, and one that our students will reflect on during their working career and always consider sustainable options in their future pursuits!

”

Nikki Stewart
& Kerry Little
HEAD TEACHERS
ULTIMO TAFE

So, we started the year educating new students on the importance of reuse within their industry and ended with a group of seasoned visual merchandisers (VM), who were looking for a reuse challenge.



TAFE students visiting the warehouse



We were approached by Dashing Group, who are a huge player in the retail space. They design and deliver the ultimate customer experience, both visually and conceptually. Dashing Group had been focusing recently on how to become more sustainable and infusing a green approach to the unfortunately wasteful nature of the VM industry. So, a challenge was set, involving three groups from the Dashing team creating a visual delight incorporating an Australian theme, land, ocean and sky with only three hours to design and create. The real challenge? Using only materials sourced from our warehouse.

Dashing's ambitions were to work towards always considering environmentally friendly materials in all future projects. Kirsten and I were privileged to be the judges of the reuse challenge which was hosted in our Education spaces and boy, were we dazzled by the Dashing teams!

The skill and creativeness was astounding! There was an underwater coral reef, made from latex offcuts and delicate scrolls of pretty paper, a bin chicken who flashed his impressive stash of wrist watches from under his coat of feathers, and lastly a bush bunyip that flashed lights! Unfortunately, there could only be one winner but how can you choose? To us, all the teams were winners as they highlighted once again that trash can indeed become visual treasure!

We look forward to future collaborations with the Dashing Group, as now we have the space and facilities to host these fantastic events for businesses who want to create a greener, more sustainable footprint.



Dashing Group's underwater coral reef



Dashing Group's bin chicken



Dashing Group's bush bunyip

As a visual merchandiser myself, I am elated by the change I have seen within this industry, which unfortunately does have quite a negative impact on the planet. This year I have been contacted by multiple high end, international and iconic brands who wish to create a change within their businesses and are looking for alternative solutions other than just landfill. Ideally, creative concepts that will factor in how they will reuse or re-distribute their props and materials prior to the conceptual phase, creating a circular economy.

Luckily, I have seen an upward trend in this practice and have gotten to know some savvy and sustainable creative professionals that do just that.

3. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PURCHASES FROM RG?

My favourite purchase is one that is actually going into a very special build as we speak. It's a perfect piece of Perspex and we have built a wall behind it which will hold some incredible memorabilia. I unfortunately can't share imagery of this one as I've signed an NDA.

We bought these gold, weird, shaped objects about a year ago, which have been put into a million jobs, re painted and recovered in different fabrics.

150 small buckets which were used to cement trees for a winter event. There have been so many little things from Reverse Garbage, which I feel have played such significant roles in so many of our builds, and I'm very grateful for the work relationship that I have with the team at RG!

Thank you for creating a creative space where people can let their imaginations run wild and a place where we can all learn to reuse, recycle, rebuild, and learn more about sustainability a little more.

HOW IMPORTANT IS SUSTAINABILITY AND REUSE TO YOUR BUSINESS AND HOW DOES RG SUPPORT YOUR GOALS AND TARGETS IN THIS AREA?

I have always tried to pride myself on how sustainable I have been able to make MFPC. Sustainability played a big part in getting a bigger warehouse. It meant with a bit more space, I was able to hold onto things and reuse, rebuild, and have less waste. The events, and TV world, especially the arts department is an incredibly wasteful industry. I am usually working on about 4 jobs at a time, so being able to pull something apart and reuse it for something else is a really helpful skill to be able to do, with RG across the road, sometimes, if I'm in need of something, I'll quickly duck over there instead of driving to Bunnings and repurchasing something new. I also find it makes me use my brain a lot more and inspires me to be able to create something a little more interesting than what I would have had I just purchased raw materials from Bunnings or another hardware store, but on top of that it means I can contribute to building a sustainable company.

The whole team at RG are so excited to hear ideas, not just from me, but everyone that goes in there, if there is something they don't have they will help find it. It's refreshing.

1. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR COMPANY, AND HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN CONNECTED TO RG AS A CUSTOMER AND PRODUCT DONOR?

Morgan Ferguson is a Creative Production Company and Creative Space / Studio which offers full-service production. We specialise in producing, designing and building experiential sets and stages for bespoke festivals, events and activations, film & TVC, Art Direction, installations and interactive experiences. I have been using RG for almost 6 years now. I used to head to the one on Addison Road, Marrickville however, the new RG location, Sydney Props and the need for more space became a significant reason for me relocating from Marrickville in February this year.

MORGAN FERGUSON
PRODUCTION CO.

THANKS FOR SHARING,
MORGAN, WE CAN'T
WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU
BUILD NEXT!

Morgan Productions, specialises in spectacular, visual activations, offering small- and large-scale props within the event, retail and music industry. Morgan is a regular at Reverse Garbage and is always forward planning how she can be sustainable with her installations.

Morgan has a studio just a hop and a skip away from Reverse Garbage, (lucky her!), so she pops in regularly to source products for her latest projects and usually has a chat and a bit of a brainstorm on how it can be achieved with the team. We asked Morgan a few questions on how important reuse and sustainability is to her business and this is what she said.

So, as you can see it's been an exciting year here at RG, with lots of building, learning and collaborating! Being able to share my insights with our RG community, is something I find extremely rewarding. Learning of people's concepts and brainstorming how their ideas can become a reality is one area in my role that I really cherish, as it allows me to be part of their creative journey, which I am honoured to be a part of!

Reverse Garbage to me, is like one big revolving door, always moving, forever changing and adapting. Materials come in, then they go out again and sometimes they come back again for a second, third, fourth time!

This organisation could not run without the amazing team we have here, everybody has their specific industry knowledge and unique skills, which they bring to Reverse Garbage. That's what makes this space so special, the collaboration of creativity and ideas.

So, a big thank-you to the team — Fiona, Lisa, Kiara, Bec — and to Tess who has since left, for all your hard work and dedication, I know at times it can be challenging but know you are part of something, so crucial and beneficial. We are all continuing to educate and create change for the planet, the present and future generations to come!



Morgan Ferguson



A prop from a local production was popular



Mobile made by staff member and artist, Fiona



Customers finding dumped treasures and bringing them in

Education report

Yasmin Andrews, Manager, Education Programs and Professional Development

With the departure of Brett Lyon in June, we welcomed emerging educator and tinkering expert, Yasmin Andrews, into the role of Education Programs Manager. Yaz is now managing RG's suite of creative reuse workshops for early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary students, professional development, plus our popular public program workshops.



As we settled into our new home, like many Sydneysiders, we ventured into the world of renovation and custom built an Education Hub featuring two rooms and a garden. The project took six months of construction using reuse materials, and was officially launched in October 2022 by our local MP Jo Haylen. The bright space, filled with examples of creative reuse, has brought new opportunities to expand our offerings and encourage people of all generations to embrace reuse and sustainability practices.

Once the Hub was finalised, a collaboration between Navitas and RG meant we could finally create our other long-term dream of building a green space for our visiting school groups, staff and volunteers to use. With the help of youth students from Western Sydney, a drab concrete blank canvas was transformed into a verdant edible garden, complete with worm farm and reuse artworks.

Other project partners including Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and NFP native plant nursery IndigiGrow, sponsored the 18-month project as part of the Navitas Skilled Futures program.

The garden demonstrates the principles of sustainable gardening practices, such as water recycling, self-wicking garden beds, 100% use of recyclable materials and donated plants. Once the plants were established the native bees and butterflies moved straight in, much to our delight.

Our Education workshop participation numbers continue to rise back to pre-Covid levels with our casual educators reaching around a thousand students every month by delivering engaging creative workshops to early childhood through to high school. That's a mighty

feat considering that in 2021 it took a year for us to reach that number of people.

The school holidays have become increasingly popular with vacation and OOSH groups booking out week-long sessions for the kids of various ages to come and learn about reuse. A visit to our site will involve a tour of the warehouse where we point out all the interesting materials and where they have been sourced from, as well as some insider knowledge on key features like our whale and dinosaur friends. Students then have a blast walking around the warehouse on a scavenger hunt looking for items that are round, squishy, or musical. This program aims to show the range of materials we have to work with here, some groups even take it a step further with our Creator Club program and use the materials they just found to make a reuse creation of their own.

The Education Hub also features a dedicated party room for Zero Waste Parties which focus on a sustainable birthday experience — no balloons allowed. This affordable and creative party package takes the difficulty out of hosting as our wonderful educators facilitates an activity for the special day. Our team works on a theme of your choosing with anything from your kiddos favourite animal or TV show to jewellery and accessories, pulling materials to perfectly suit the party. This year we've made egg carton crocodiles, garden mobiles and Minecraft-themed art. These parties are a fun way to incorporate sustainability into your celebration as we aim to keep it all reusable.

The workshops run as part of our public programs offerings have continuously received 5 star reviews via the Class Bento app, which is the platform we use to manage the bookings.



The custom built Education Hub space



A zero waste birthday party



School holiday groups at RG



Navitas youth students planting the green space

A huge thanks to all the workshop facilitators, some who even do it in a voluntary capacity, to spread the love of upcycling and creative reuse across the community for both children and adults. Many participants have praised the facilitators for their patience and expertise and mention how comfortable, warm and welcoming the unique Education Hub space is.

Scraping in before the end of the financial year was our first-ever Educators' VIP Shopping Fair, held on the second last week of June. Despite a mighty Sydney downpour on the first day — late night Thursday shopping from 5–8pm — the 3-day event was a success with early childhood and primary school educators keen to stock up and transform their space into creative classrooms. Read more about the event on page 32.

We continued to connect with local community groups such as the Inner West Youth Rainbow group who used the space and materials to create reuse decorations for their prom. We also supported various Pride celebrations including Rainbow Families for their annual International Family Equality Day event.

Another fun project was delivered for NSW Health's Agency for Clinical Innovation. They reached out to our team to create sculptures from medical reuse materials for their staff awards night. Our educators enjoyed creating three striking conversation starter pieces using materials normally found in science labs.

Long-term friend of RG and volunteer, Celia, launched a monthly mending circle for community members to come together once a month to learn about and share tips on repairing clothing items. The group has grown into a popular session with many new friendships forged and menders returning regularly for great conversation and inspiration for more creative projects. We've even attracted younger generations who've never touched a sewing machine before, walking away having made a new bag and learning valuable new skills.

An enormous thanks to all the Education team who have supported our transition into our new home and have managed all the changes, new systems and processes with openness and at times humour! With special mention to Bea for managing a constant influx of enquiries and messages, on top of their many other duties!



NSW Health Agency for Clinical Innovation Awards Night sculptures



DIY Games workshop



Lino print workshop



Inner West Youth Rainbow Group making decos for their prom

Connecting via Green Pathways

A COLLABORATION WITH INNER WEST COUNCIL, TARONGA ZOO AND REVERSE GARBAGE INSPIRES LOCAL STUDENTS TO CONNECT WITH THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Teachers from Casmir Catholic College found new ways to embed interesting STEM learning for 172 x Year 8 students at the Marrickville-based secondary school. After undertaking professional development, the teachers were excited to engage this year's cohort in the critical thinking, collaboration and enrichment that STEM projects offer, by working with local organisations on a real-world project.

With the support of environmental and conservation organisations, Reverse Garbage and Taronga Zoo, in conjunction with Inner West Council, students worked in groups or individually to design systems to enhance the local corridor of Inner West Council's GreenWay project and add value to people and the environment.

Louise Macdonald from Casmir Catholic College said:



Casmir Catholic College students designing enhancements for the Inner West Council's GreenWay project

Having Reverse Garbage come and work with the students, taught them about the environment, reuse and recycling, from an organisation that is right here on their doorstep. Students then had the knowledge to go and source their materials for their projects. Having the zoo bring in local animals helped the students engage with the "why" of the project and provided so much inspiration for them. Listening to Council and the work currently occurring really solidified the project as an authentic real world application.

The project was put on display during a Showcase for friends and family, which allowed everyone to see the creative ideas and work the students had created for their local community.

THANKS TO LOUISE MACDONALD, THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF THE LEARNING CENTRE AT CASMIR CATHOLIC COLLEGE, MARRICKVILLE.

Operations report

Louise McDonald

All systems (almost) go...



It's been a mighty year of trial and error as we adjust to a smaller footprint in the warehouse. Our move was well recorded last year and this year was all about introducing new systems and processes to keep a good flow of product in store and in our limited storage.

We were fortunate to have access to a free storage facility for a few months; however, by early 2023 we were required to clear it out. Finding space for the products became a clever game of tetris, one we are regularly playing!

Donations from both industry and private donors have continued to stream in thick and fast. We connected with suppliers of card drums, rubber/cork sheets, excellent quality fake grass pieces and rolls. There was also much excitement when we found a new supplier of Ethyl Vinyl Acetate 'Skins' as there has not been a Sydney supplier since manufacturing ceased at the original Gosford suppliers many years ago.

A fortuitously timed link with our large cardboard drum supplier Pylon occurred just as the business was sold to a new company. The timing was perfect for the original owner who has put us in contact with the new company and given us the last of the supply available at the old premises. The original company started in the 1870s and all of the owners over the generations are called Ron Pryor including the last one.

One of our new suppliers, Rip Graphics, very kindly helped us by cutting offcuts of their donations on their computerised cutter into 6 x 10cm rectangles. A year's worth of supply was used as the base for vehicles in education workshops.

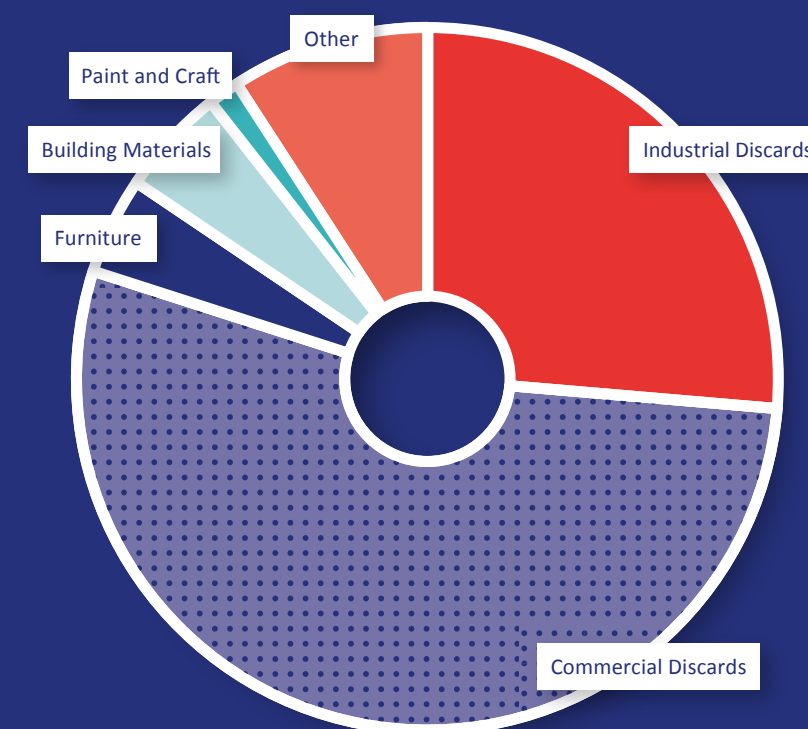
The last day of January had just shy of three tonnes of supplies donated in one day — a third of the whole month's weight.

For many long term established businesses, a factory move or closure resulted in us receiving significant donations, many requiring multiple truck loads. These included a toy factory in Leichhardt and lamp businesses in Camperdown and Padstow. Homewares also featured largely with a well-known kitchenware business from Balmain closing and donating a percentage of their remaining stock.

We welcomed new local suppliers from Arncliffe and Marrickville to our regular industrial donors, who continue to deliver quality industrial offcuts.



CATEGORY OF MATERIALS SOLD



Large event companies and shopping centres gave us a run of oversized and/or interesting props that had many other event organisers scrambling to buy up. These included huge stainless steel balls, odd hexagonal metal shapes, plus some giant sushi and bubble tea stands.

It was a who's who of Sydney cultural institutions with Barangaroo, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (aka Powerhouse), Opera House and Carriageworks, all reaching out with donations. The unique transport award goes to Marcus who caught a truck ride on a punt to Cockatoo Island in November.

May turned into Mannequin May with a large shipment of antique models gracing the warehouse but quickly finding new homes. May also took the award for the most donations received with just under 4 tonnes of plastics accepted in May for reuse, which is 1-2 tonnes above the norm.

Most unusual donations included rickshaws to giant dinosaur salad leaves, a set of enormous two-metre plastic blow up balls for walking on water. Giant pineapples and watermelons came to RG by way of the Mardi Gras,

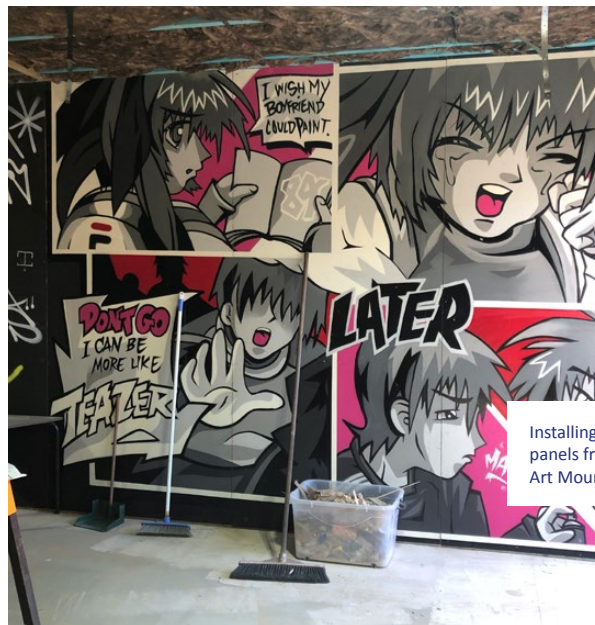
as did many glittery and colourful props. Plus, a large semi trailer load of flowers and plants and giant banana leaves arrived just in time to brighten up the winter.

Our most memorable collection was a long distance trip to Bundanoon, with Marcus bringing in a remarkable amount of lace from a donor.

We even attracted the sparkly end of town with international fashion labels donating a tonne of high end perspex display boxes, as well as other beautiful props, such as raffia flowers from their window displays.

A huge thanks to Lou for her 19 years' of service at Reverse Garbage. Lou started as Retail Assistant before becoming the Warehouse Manager a few years ago. She left Reverse Garbage in August having forged several strong connections with many industries across Sydney, including event production company, Alchemy.

A huge thank you to the Operations team — Emma and Marcus — for continuing to keep things running so smoothly and effectively during a time of tremendous change.



Installing donated art panels from Graphic Art Mount in St Peters



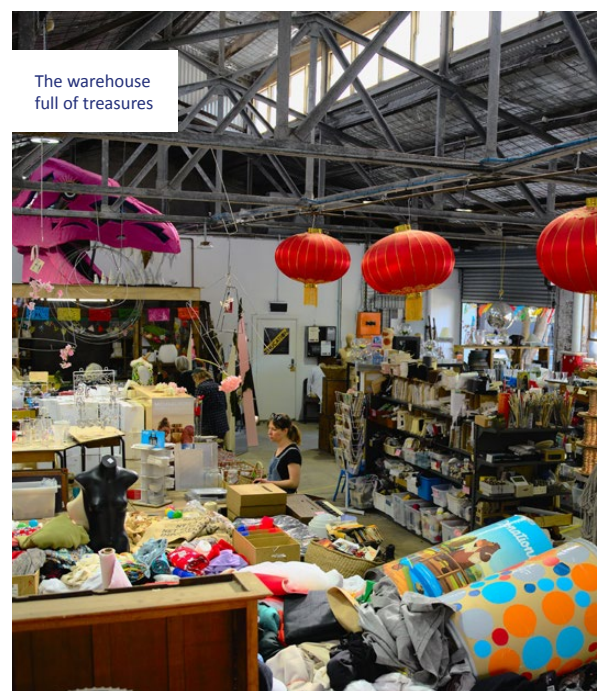
The warehouse full of treasures



Kirsten and Greta from Graphic Art Mount



Marcus and Emma making easy work of a donation



A warehouse floral display

Donor Spotlight

ALCHEMY

Alchemy Co is a custom manufacturing company focusing on bespoke activations and installations in the events industry operating for over 20 years. Clients approach us with concepts and designs and we normally have a very limited time turning it from paper to the real thing.

Unfortunately with bespoke items and copyright implications many of these can not be reused within our future projects. After its initial use our clients are given the option of a reinstallation and storage or to give a notice of disposal. That's when we start to contact Reverse Garbage.

Duarte Oliveira, my predecessor, first made contact with Reverse Garbage around 2015 to take some items, since then RG has been our first point of call when we get a notice of disposal.

Alchemy over the years has been looking into minimising its waste impact gearing towards recyclable materials such as Xboard, clean timber and reproduced HDPE plastic sheets from Dyfy Designs. With the industry and our area of it, reuse and recycling is a big part for us.

Any chance we can minimise landfill we feel it's our responsibility to do so.

Our regular donations recently have been large Polystyrene letters, random large food props and trestle tables. The most memorable prop or item donated we can remember was the Kayo Stonehenge, which was a mimic of Stonehenge, England but with sporting equipment taking the shape of some of the stones.

Reverse Garbage helps us reach goals of green gearing and also with many items we hope the resale of this helps RG reach their own goals. Also when our clients hear that items have been passed on to RG they are excited and relieved that they have been given another chance of reuse. We look forward to continuing our partnership in the future.

CHARLIE MCDONALD
ALCHEMY CO



Our team

Employees

With our (ware) house warmed, our team have well and truly gotten down to business this year and worked exceptionally hard to try and recoup some lost revenue after Covid lockdowns and the big move.

We had some sad farewells counteracted by some happy welcomes. Our casual educators continue to share the gift of sustainability education with the masses, visiting early education, primary and high schools across all of NSW to spread the 'reuse' word.

With our new site having a dedicated Education Hub and garden, the team have bonded at staff events ranging from an evening mending circle where darning socks and stockings were the main attraction, to a winter BBQ around a toasty fire pit. Marshmallows were roasted and staff fur babies were cuddled.

And thank you to previous staff members who have moved on to other adventures — Leah, Tess, and Lou.

What is your favourite donation?

Piano wire spools and fire hose. So versatile!

KIRSTEN
CEO

My favourite donation were the awesome, sparkly fruit props we got in just after Mardi Gras because who doesn't love a sparkly watermelon and pineapple!

EMMA
RETAIL
MANAGER

Giant disco balls — there are some great parties happening around town thanks to those.

MEL
MARKETING AND
COMMS MANAGER

I loved the carpenter boxes that came in — the colours and durability of them is just fantastic.

YASMIN
EDUCATION
PROGRAMS
MANAGER

A risograph kit that one of my fellow artist friends ended up buying!

BEA
PROJECT
CO-ORDINATOR

LOU
OPERATIONS
MANAGER

Casual Educators

It would have to be a bulk donation of wax moulds of vaginas.

EMMA
OPERATIONS

Old very vintage cameras and film rolls.

MARCUS
OPERATIONS

The giant lion that was almost roof high was a lovely temporary addition to the warehouse for a few weeks.

LISA
RETAIL
ASSISTANT

The giant whale which now hangs above the Fill-a-bag section.

FIONA
RETAIL
ASSISTANT

The old anatomy mannequin that you could take the organs out of.

BEC
RETAIL
ASSISTANT

LEAH
MARKETING AND
COMMS MANAGER

BRETT

CHLOE

DUY

ELLA

KIARA

LOU

MIA

MIK

MILES

SALLY

And a huge thank you to our casual educators who have since moved on — Kari, Kayla, Luke and Shal.

Our team

Volunteers

As tennis player, Arthur Ashe, famously said, “Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”

Many of the vitally important cogs in our wheel are our dedicated volunteers who keep things moving in full motion at RG. Community volunteers often arrive at Reverse Garbage from far and wide, and make themselves at home among the colourful, kooky and unusual props, materials and wares.

One of our longest standing volunteers is Celia (along with her husband Peter), who has been connected to Reverse Garbage for over 20 years after initially working as a part-time retail assistant in 2001:

“I’d been an RG shopper for many years before that so I guess you could say I’ve been a ‘Friend of Reverse Garbage’ for decades”, explains Celia.

“I adore having an idea and being able to sustainably source the materials I need from RG. It’s rare for us to buy things new these days — so many resources already exist if we can find clever ways to reuse them!”

Celia and Peter have been local sustainability advocates for over five years. They are strongly committed to

reducing their environmental footprint and sharing the personal knowledge they’ve gained along the way with others keen to also live more sustainably.

It wasn’t until Celia retired from her administration job in 2020 that she dove into volunteering pursuits through local environmental charities such as Reverse Garbage and The Bower. This has included facilitating Sustainability Working Bees and hosting a regular drop-in space for the community to repair together.

“As part of our drive to reduce waste, I’d also become an avid mender, so in 2022 I approached RG to see if they might have a volunteer role for me in that capacity, which kickstarted the RG Mending Circle,” says Celia.

Twelve months on, our ever popular monthly drop-in mending group now meets for a couple of hours on the last Monday of each month in the RG Education Hub. It’s open to everyone, and all you need to bring is a gold coin donation, a keep cup and a project to work on.

“It’s such a wonderful group and it’s given me the opportunity to build community. I truly think that’s what’s missing in today’s society — the opportunity to form bonds with like minded folk, and the emotional and sometimes practical support that can provide.”



Mending group in action



Hamish and his bag that he made after learning how to sew for the very first time

Reverse Garbage has always been about supporting the local community. Plus it’s like a magical souk for creatives!

As a small stretched team, we often don’t have enough time to play, make and create with our plentiful supply of resources. That’s where three of our wonderful creative volunteers have saved the day over and over again. Bronwyn, Hattie and Ella devoted hours of their precious time to help showcase our materials by making art to impress and inspire our many customers.

Bronwyn is a retired costume designer who worked at Opera Australia. Hattie is an emerging artist and printmaker who is studying at National Art School. Ella is an event and installation artist with impressive skills using a needle and thread.

“I so enjoy being a volunteer, the team here have been very welcoming and I feel valued!” says Bronwyn.



Bronwyn making bunting for the Footprints Eco Fest



Volunteers helping to paint the Ed space



One of Hattie's collages



KPMG volunteers



Our team

Board members



I'm involved with RG because... avoiding waste is a passion of mine, so being part of an organisation that promotes waste avoidance and reuse is an absolute "no brainer" for me!!!

Ellen O'Brien
Chairperson

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 joined the Reverse Garbage Board in 2019 and she believes that education and communicating sustainability are key for the behavioural changes required for us to successfully aid us in managing challenges posed by climate change. She lives in the Inner West.



Little known reuse fact about me... I once used some RG paper to make a huge, magnificent naked portrait of Donald Trump (from the back) for a game of Pin the Arsehole on the Arsehole (I also made little paper arseholes) for an American election party.

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.



Little known reuse fact about me... that I rarely discard a good container or stationery — there is always a use waiting to materialise.

Sally Barber
Director

BEd 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. She is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and 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.



I'm involved with RG because... it's very satisfying to see RG so well established and all that the board and staff have been working towards has come to fruition.

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 joined the Reverse Garbage Board in 2018 and has enjoyed the opportunity of working with an iconic organisation dedicated to sustainability, education and reuse. She lives in the Inner West.



I'm involved with RG because... of all that it has taught me. In my 20's it taught me how to work with the people I met to create a community. In my 30's it taught me how to better resource my work as a teacher. In my 40's and 50's the people of RG taught me the many ways that cooperatives could survive in a competitive world. In my 60's I learnt that there are RGs all over the world. Now in my 70's I'm looking for whatever it will teach me next.

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 education lecturer for over 35 years. During that time he maintained his contact with the cooperative, returning to the board in 2016. He lives in the Inner West.

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.



Little known reuse fact about me... I also volunteer at an organisation in my suburb that collects furniture and electrical equipment that is in good order and delivers it to households in need.

Naomi Brennan
Director

Grad. Dip. Adult Education; Masters Public Administration

Naomi has around 20 years experience working as a CEO in the Not-for-Loss Sector. She was the CEO of Reverse Garbage before retiring in 2022 and later, joining the Board in December. Naomi's diverse early background included adult education, program management and political adviser, before moving to the NFP sector. She doesn't live in the Inner West, but spends half her life there.



My favourite finds at RG are... the things I was not looking for. I often go there looking for something specific and come away with something completely unexpected. There is always something there I didn't realise I needed.

Scott Brunsdon
Director

BE-d (USyd)

Scott is a local and long term patron of Reverse Garbage. He has been on the board since 2015. 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.



My favourite finds at RG are... the people that work here! Honestly, you'll never find such a passionate bunch of creative, inspiring, and dedicated individuals!

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



My favourite find at RG was... a few years ago I came with my daughter to get ready for Book Week. We were looking for felt to make a Peter Rabbit outfit. As well as finding felt, we found a big blue pouffe. The next year we cut holes in it and stuffed my daughter into it to create Violet Beauregarde from Willy Wonka.

Kate Mills
Director

Kate Mills is the CEO of the Property Industry Foundation, which raises money from the property industry to build and refurbish homes for homeless youth. Prior to this, Kate was the CEO of the Financial Executives Institute, and also worked as a journalist for 20 years. Kate is passionate about creative thinking and has recently completed her MA in Creative and Critical Thinking.

Partnerships

Thanks to our partners from the corporate, community and advocacy world who collectively share the desire to make our world a better place through action on environmental and sustainability issues.

Some of these organisations and initiatives include Charitable Recycling Australia and its members, NSW EPA Co-Design, Gateway Bank, Social Enterprise Council of NSW & ACT (SECNA), Deloitte (Impact Day).

Gateway Bank

It was like at first sight for Gateway Bank and Reverse Garbage at TedX Sydney four years ago. As Australia's leading customer-owned green bank, a partnership quickly blossomed between the two organisations who are both committed to addressing ongoing climate challenges. Gateway staff now regularly volunteer at RG as part of their workplace engagement program, with the team spending a day every month in the warehouse supporting both our stretched Retail and Operations teams.

"We always look forward to welcoming the team at Gateway, as they're always willing to undertake any jobs we throw at them: whether it's painting cardboard drums, building craft packs or sorting through our stationary section, they're keen to do what they can to support the reuse movement", says Kirsten Junor, CEO, Reverse Garbage.

Gateway has also funded our national creative reuse competition, Reconsidered, with a \$5,000 pool of prize money that goes to the winning students across the country.

"Gateway highly value our relationship with Reverse Garbage. Over the last financial year 40% of Gateway's employees were able to volunteer at Reverse Garbage, in addition to taking part in workshops to enhance their sustainability understanding and skills.

We are grateful for Reverse Garbage's participation in Gateway's Pocket and Planet Advisory Council, and regular contribution to Gateway's Dollaroo newsletter, helping educate future generations about the importance of re-use.

LEXI AIREY, CEO, GATEWAY BANK



Gateway volunteers



Peter from Gateway donating IT

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

Packforce is an Australian Disability Enterprise that is a division of Cerebral Palsy Alliance (CPA), and provides a workplace where people with a range of disabilities can be employed while receiving any necessary support that may be difficult to provide in mainstream employment.

"Our partnership with Reverse Garbage began through my wonderful Administration Assistant, Amparo, who is very passionate about limiting waste into landfill. There are many parts of the products we pack that can be re-used, for example, some sharpeners that we repackage for Staedtler come in round plastic trays that are perfect for putting paint in for the schools.

We also have a small pneumatic machine that was supplied to us by a customer to cut to an exact length their "dip tubes", which is basically the nozzle and tube that goes into a spray bottle. The ones in the bottles on sale at Reverse Garbage were longer than required, and by cutting them with our machine we not only provided great training for our team but we also improved the efficacy of the tube itself, as the machine also cuts a small "U" shape which means that the whole of the contents of the spray bottle will be able to be used.

Another task that our team really enjoyed was cutting swing tags and tying the string onto them. It was a great way for our guys to practice following a sample, tracing, cutting and typing, all skills which directly transfer to the sort of work we do. During the rare times that we have a gap between jobs it's been really beneficial for us to have these sorts of tasks to fall back on.

I think that the fact both Packforce and Reverse Garbage are the types of businesses who like to think outside the square and see opportunities where others may see a problem mean that we will continue to grow our partnership into the future.

DAMIEN JONES, SITE MANAGER, PACKFORCE



Cerebral Palsy Alliance bag tags

The Social Outfit

As far as neighbours go, we couldn't ask for better ones than the lovely team at The Social Outfit, who recently moved into Marrickville. The social enterprise works hard to ensure refugee women have suitable and ethical employment pathways in the fashion industry. Through Kirsten's connections, RG welcomed the opportunity to establish a mutually beneficial arrangement, where we pass on some of our salvaged fabrics and in return the team sew up our fill-a-bag sacks for our customers to use when shopping for industrial discards. Early educators and artists in particular love the fill-a-bag section!

"Our collaboration with Reverse Garbage has been an absolute dream! It has allowed The Social Outfit to use the "Fill a Bag" production as training for our Garment Sewing Technicians while making a great reusable product. We look forward to more collaborations with Reverse Garbage in the future!

UCELEN GABRIEL, PRODUCTION MANAGER, THE SOCIAL OUTFIT



The Social Outfit

Kimbriki - The Hub

Sydney's largest resource and recovery centre, is a charmingly named site called Kimbriki.

A joint venture between two northern Sydney councils — the enormous space in Terry Hills is a hive of activity as trucks, utes and residents bring their discarded materials to be sorted and reused in a responsible manner. Together, we share many traits and also age: both RG and Kimbriki are close to a golden milestone.

With both organisations committed to reuse, sustainability and environmental education, it was a thrill to be offered a permanent space by the Kimbriki team to enable RG to co-locate and offer our Education Programs to the many reuse champions located in northern Sydney.

Our site at the Kimbriki is located in The Hub alongside other charities committed to reuse including Bikes 4 Life, Peninsula Toy Recyclers and Boomerang Bags. Also featured at Kimbriki is a Buy Back Centre — a place to purchase secondhand goods - an Eco House and Garden, which like RG also hosts school groups and excursions.

“Our vision for The Hub at Kimbriki was to provide a working space for charities and not-for-profits who share our passion for reducing waste to landfill. Reverse Garbage fit this perfectly through their innovative workshops which inspire creative reuse of waste materials.”

PETER DAVIS, CEO, KIMBRIKI

The vision is to run regular RG public workshop programs, host school groups and educators professional development sessions for the residents of northern Sydney. Allowing them regular access to our popular workshops at a venue that's accessible.

Leichhardt Community Corrections

Community Corrections (formerly Probation and Parole) have worked together with Reverse Garbage since the early 1980s to provide opportunity to those sentenced by the court undertaking reparation under the Community Service Orders Scheme. This places Reverse Garbage as the longest standing agency in partnership with our District Office and indeed with Corrective Service NSW.

“Community Service Orders (CSO) are the only reparation pathway for the courts, it also provides opportunity to guide those sentenced to establish routine and purpose. Despite occasional resistance, the remarkable skill shown by the staff is to motivate our clients towards better outcomes. Testimony to the dynamic and dedicated commitment of the staff, are the positive outcomes and inclusive experience reported by our clients. Focus for Community Corrections is towards guiding those under our care to implement better choices and therefore contribute towards a safer community. Our administrative team regularly opine about the powerful influence the staff have had upon our clients. It is also pleasing to receive positive comments and reviews by former clients who believe that they have been supported through the completion of their orders.”

The ongoing value of Reverse Garbage as a partner agency continues and we look forward to many years of collaboration into the future.

RICK PRATLEY DISTRICT MANAGER,
LEICHHARDT COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Out and about staff visits

Despite being an inspiration destination for many of our customers, at times our team often needs to look beyond our warehouse walls for ideas we can bring in-house.

This year we have been fortunate to arrange staff excursions to some of the local reuse organisations we admire. Some are relatively new on the scene while others have been going as long as RG. We walked away brimming with ideas but also serious space envy!

The Salvos operation at their headquarters, which is a 5-min drive away from RG, opened our eyes to the systems and processes they have set up to manage the influx of donations they receive every day.

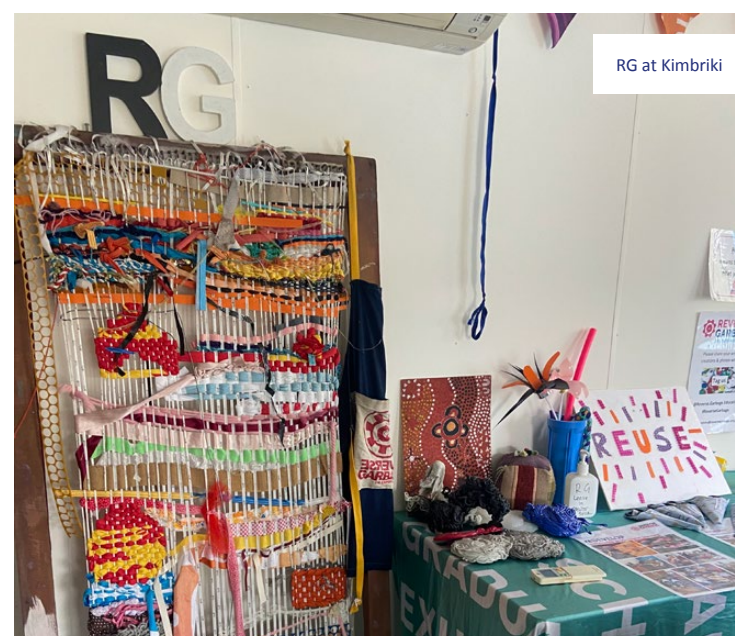
Good 360 and Thread Together both do incredible work in rediverting pre-consumer goods and then passing new

items onto vulnerable communities. Both are fueled by large volunteer armies who process enormous pallets of items that have avoided the fate of skip bins.

And regular visits to the north side of Sydney means popping into our partners at the Kimbriki Resource and Recovery Centre and also Cerebral Palsy Alliance's Packforce. The latter's warm and welcoming operation supports people living with disability by providing employment opportunities suitable for all abilities. The team has been busy transforming our stock of manilla folders and ribbons into gift tags. (see pages 26-28 for more about these partnerships).



Visiting Kimbriki



RG at Kimbriki



Lou and Marcus visiting
The Salvos HQ



Kirsten and Mel
at Good 360

Workplace Engagement Programs

After decades of offering sustainability and creative play education programs to the younger generations, it was time to finally launch a RG Workplace Engagement program.

Designed to share our knowledge and inspire corporate teams to reconsider waste and reframe discarded materials as we continue to advocate for a circular economy.

Our edu-maker experiences for groups range from simple tutorials such as Sew Handy (learn basic sewing skills for mending and repair), Waste Knot (mystery box challenge), Collabarty (create a collaborative artwork to display in an office) and Sustain-My-Ability (warehouse tour and activity). All offer workplaces creative and unique team building experiences, either on-site at their place or ours, that are interactive, informative and support our organisation in championing reuse.

A huge thank you to those teams who have booked an RG Workplace Engagement program — we enjoyed hosting you all and sharing our love of reuse while soaking up the fun and vibrancy of Reverse Garbage.



VIP shopping Educators Fair

June 22–24 saw the first (of hopefully many) curated shopping experiences for educators and teachers looking to incorporate more reuse into their centres and classrooms.

The event kicked off with late night Thursday shopping from 5–8pm, which unfortunately coincided with an infamous Sydney storm. However, despite attendance being lower than we hoped, the rain didn't dampen the spirits of those who did attend with sales tallying hundreds of dollars.

The Retail team excelled at setting up product zones, alongside samples to demonstrate some of the possibilities with our reuse materials. With the help of our terrific volunteers, they created hundreds of packs including bottle top buckets, various art and craft packs and Loose Parts Play sets, to make an easy and enjoyable shopping experience for the educators.

We also spruced up the garden and opened up the Education rooms to allow educators to have a peek at the new space for potential excursion bookings.

Our VIP shoppers also appreciated all the 'Hot Tip' posters scattered around the warehouse, as well as ideas from previous Reverse Garbage Truck Craft Books, such as making musical instruments using bottle tops and string, plus turning magazines into lanterns.

The majority of each transaction over the three days totalled over \$100. The Saturday of the Educators Fair ended up being the largest trading date ever at Carrington Rd, with teams of early childhood educators stocking up big on creative play materials. Our weekend team were run off their feet all day, and through that experience walked away with some key learnings for future events.



Our social impact

While our overall mission is to spotlight reuse, our objective is to do so while focusing on the holy trinity of organisational impact — environmental, economic and social.

During this post-Covid recovery year, we've all been presented with further challenges that have pushed many to their limit. We're proud to try and mitigate some of these difficulties by ensuring that our social, economic and environmental impact is at the forefront of all that we do.

Environmentally, our impact continues to extend beyond our local geographical zone with more industrial and private donors from greater Sydney jumping on board the reuse train. Our network within the sustainability sector continues to extend allowing us the opportunity to amplify our voice and contribute towards long-lasting policy decisions associated with Australia's transition towards a circular economy.

Economically, despite the rising cost of living affecting just about every corner of the country, our Retail team continue to work hard to ensure they're pricing items at below general RRP to remain affordable and accessible to all who want to champion reuse products. This involves researching average prices of items and regular visits to other local secondhand shops.

Socially, our partnership with Leichhardt and Burwood Communication Corrections, means that we can offer those with community service orders (CSO) or Work Development Orders (WDO) a safe, inclusive and non-judgemental space to rehabilitate or contribute to the community after exposure to the justice system.

One of our volunteers so enjoyed his time at RG that he likes to pop in and shop here:

"I'm pleased to inform you that I've completed my 100hrs at Reverse Garbage!"

"In a weird way, I feel sad that I'm not going to see Fi and Bec on Sundays. The team at Reverse Garbage has been a pleasure to work with. I'm sure I'll be back as a customer."

Burwood Community Corrections

Many of the packaged items we sell of popular reuse resources such as ribbon and small wooden bits are packaged together by volunteers who are connected to the Community Corrections program in Burwood.

The program allows offenders to avoid incarceration while also contributing to their community by doing voluntary work with community groups such as RG.

Many of the clients connected to Burwood Community Connections are unable to work due to physical restrictions or other barriers, so this gives these people, many who are socially isolated, an opportunity to contribute to their community by supporting non-profits such as ours.



Our community



Regular RG customer Felicity Frock getting playful with one of our furry friends.



We love it when our furry friends come visit too!

Banana the chicken lives along the river nearby and pops in, Gizmo stopped by for a squiz around and we miss old friends like Benson who is enjoying his new home in Canberra.



Ellie and Gus from Penny Marathon.

Inner West Council's Footprints Ecofestival

An annual event at Annandale's Whites Creek Valley Park featuring environmentally sustainable practices, projects and programs. This year RG made many metres of bunting and a floral cake for the festival.



RG at Inner West Council's big Pride Celebration in early 2023.



We're not sure how many costumes are created from RG resources, we just know it's a lot and oh so varied
Creative Design Challenge teachers at Tempe HS
dressed by students with reuse RG materials.



We celebrated one year at Carrington Rd!



May the 4th Be with You — reuse style.



EDGE Sydenham supporting
artist Clare Walton's project.



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