

Year 9 Design and Technology students source recycled materials

This term, Year 9 Design and Technology students have been learning about the unethical social and environmental impacts made by the fashion industry. Areas of the textile industry are known to pollute our environment, contribute to landfill and create toxic waste. Last year, it was estimated that Australians discarded up to fifteen tonnes of textile waste every ten minutes. In addition to these harmful environmental impacts, the fashion industry has been criticised for failing to be inclusive and not providing sufficient options to cater for those who have specific needs or disabilities. This was a key topic of conversation highlighted at the 2021 Australian Fashion Week.

As our society becomes more concerned with environmental issues surrounding textile design and more socially aware of the need for inclusivity, there is growing consumer demand for designers to create inclusive and sustainable products.

Meriden's Year 9 D and T students have taken up the challenge of designing an entirely sustainable and inclusive bag collection. Students have been asked to apply their research and design at least one bag in their collection that caters to a person with specific needs or a disability. The bag design must seamlessly fit into the collection and functionally cater to the needs of the user. The products must also only be made out of recycled materials.

Recently, the girls visited Achieve Australia's social enterprise, The Sewing Basket, to source their materials. Achieve Australia delivers disability services in Sydney and the Northern Rivers and runs The Sewing Basket stores located around New South Wales. The stores provide employment opportunities for individuals with a disability and only sell donated materials including fabrics, patterns, patchwork, embroidery materials, yarn and haberdashery.

We organised time with the store's manager who educated us further on the positive impacts The Sewing Basket stores have on the community and the environment. Since the initiative began in 1998, the stores have saved and resold countless amounts of textile waste that would have otherwise contributed to Australia's landfill. Customers are able to sustainably and cost-effectively shop for their textile materials, knowing that their spending goes back into Achieve Australia's amazing work.

The students had an exciting afternoon sourcing all their materials for their upcoming project, choosing from an extensive selection. Students were inspired and worked collaboratively to develop innovative ideas. A big thank you to Miss Christiana Boutros, one of our Design and Technology teachers, for accompanying our class and challenging students to develop creative design concepts as they sourced their materials.

So next time you are looking for materials, take a leaf out of our Year 9 D and T students' books and try sourcing your items sustainably!

Mrs Naomi Valle

Design and Creative Arts Teacher



Year 9 Design and Technology students selecting materials from The Sewing Basket