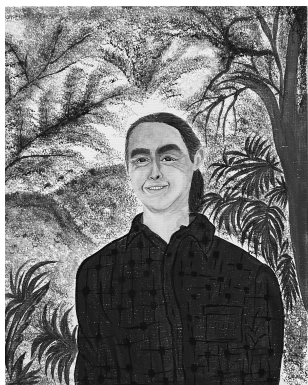


ART FOR IMPACT EXHIBITION

“ART FOR IMPACT” SERVES AS A POWERFUL PLATFORM FOR ART TO INFLUENCE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT. THROUGH THE STORIES OF LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY HEROES, IT CELEBRATES AND ENCOURAGES ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES, SPECIFICALLY HIGHLIGHTING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY LIVING LAB (CIRCULAR CASEY). THIS INITIATIVE ULTIMATELY SEEKS TO INSPIRE POSITIVE CHANGE AND PROMOTE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES, USING ART AS A MEDIUM FOR IMPACTFUL STORYTELLING AND AWARENESS BUILDING.



#1 Russell Smits

Hi, I'm Russell and I teach at Casey Tech School.

I learned how to be a geologist and environmental scientist way before I studied that at university. As a kid, I would learn from finding bugs, running through

shrubs where I would get lost and then find my way out. It was the most incredible outdoor adventure for me.

Another passion I had was gardening and growing vegetables. Tomatoes were my favourite. I just loved spending time in the garden in summer. I remember them as my happiest times; sunny days and dirt under my fingernails. Now I try to get students to see the world through the same lens, appreciating everything that being outdoors in nature can offer us.

Last year I had some informal conversations with some team members in Council working on **food security** programs and youth engagement, and we had a eureka moment: Why not set up a garden here on campus with the students?

I could see so many opportunities to talk about food awareness, to discuss healthy eating habits and obesity prevention, and also to incorporate conversations around access to culturally appropriate food, which is a massive issue in our diverse community. There are residents that need to go across the whole municipality just to buy certain vegetables. I find that crazy given how much we can grow in our backyards.

So we started a food security program here at Casey Tech School, and we have a thriving greenhouse outside.

We are doing much more than horticulture here; we are creating an automated greenhouse, with sensors that respond to temperature and that open and close doors automatically.

I am thrilled at the infinite potential to teach math, data analysis, biology, digital learning and critical thinking, and I can't talk enough about the positive effects that this new outdoor class has on

students' health. That space has a way for everyone to get involved, get curious, improve their mental wellbeing, and discover something they are passionate about and might pursue as a career in the future.

I believe that this multidisciplinary approach, particularly around a topic that everyone can relate to, such as food and local cultivation, will continue to provide us with a unique opportunity to engage local youth. Most importantly, we are witnessing how the next generation in Casey is innovating and generating solutions to complex problems by having exposure to these active learning experiences.

I am full of hope for the future when students come up with ideas like providing incentives for Casey residents to establish vegetable patches in their backyards. These types of solutions are crucial to foster locally grown food, enhance food security, address the rising cost of living, and live a happier life in harmony with our environment.



#2 Emma Tonkin

Hi, I'm Emma, and I'm currently completing a Bachelor of Environment and Society degree at RMIT. My journey into sustainability wasn't an overnight epiphany; it has been a gradual process fuelled by education, curiosity, and a commitment to

learn how to live a 'good life'—a question that has fascinated me since my high school philosophy classes. While I initially ventured into early education, the pandemic made me rethink my career choices. However, during my time working in kindergartens within Casey, I carried my sustainability ethos into teaching young children about being good humans and caring for the Earth.

Food waste has been an area that I've been particularly passionate about. Although I had been familiar with OzHarvest through my studies, the opportunity to participate in their Use It Up program during Circular Casey gave me the hands-on experience I was craving. The program was an eye-opener. Sure, my family and I were already doing our part by **composting** at home, but there was still food that went to waste—mostly because we hadn't found a way to utilize it before it spoiled. The Use It Up program changed that for me. It taught me and my family simple yet effective strategies, like using clear containers in the fridge, so I can see and remember to use up the food before it goes bad.

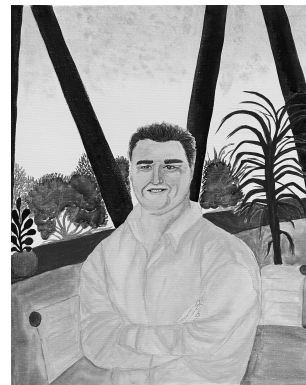
But the impact extended beyond my immediate family. In particular, my partner's family have started to make sustainable changes based on my experiences. From something as simple as adding a garden waste bin to their household to using kitchen caddies for composting, it's incredibly rewarding to see the ripple effect of one person's actions.

While I've taken courses that focus on circular economy and community engagement, it's the practical application that really bridged the gap for me. It's not just about sustainability; it's about a long-term investment in our future, both as individuals and as part of a larger ecosystem. It's also about saving money and strengthening our personal identities through a better connection with the land we live on.

To those who are hesitant about diving into sustainability or circular economy initiatives, take it from me: you don't have to do it all at once. Start with one step, one swap, one challenge at a time. No one expects you to be perfect right out of the gate. Take your time to explore different sustainable practices and find what works for you and your family.

Because in the end, every small change matters, and you'll be amazed at how those little steps can lead to big, meaningful impact.

I loved this experience and will continue in my journey, as well as sharing best practices with community members through my Instagram blog @ecoconscious_emma.



#3 Fraser Brown

Hi, my name is Fraser. I am the Director of Brown Property Group, a development and civil construction company. Our hands have been consistently engaged in projects that resonate with the spirit of Casey, from

schools to roads, supporting its growth for over two decades.

At our core, we believe in acting local. We source, produce and build locally and we always have in mind the needs of the community and the environmental impact of our construction.

It's not just about being sustainable; it's about efficient operations. When we produce waste, it hits our bottom line. We've championed recycling concrete, steel, and other materials, standing by the principle that producing waste means wasting money.

We've faced challenges head-on, like the pesky issue of **expanded polystyrene** in construction: It's cheap and used a lot in construction, but it's so light that it flies and disperses in the local environment, causing water and land pollution. It's a big issue for the local farmers because their cows ingest it.

We have been looking at ways to work with the builders that are on our site to reduce their waste, and with the Activ Group project that was lunched during Circular Casey we saw an opportunity to go one step further.

We're pioneering a system where builders on our site can responsibly manage their waste, creating a deposit area, or a transfer station, where builders can drop material off, making sure it's in the appropriate bin. Then Activ Group can help us assess the quality, ensuring that everything from timber to expanded polystyrene gets a second chance, if not in construction, then in some other valuable form.

We are still in the infancy of this collaboration, but the vision is clear: redefine waste management in construction. A circular economy is not just about low-quality recycling, such as turning timber into pulp; it's about realising the latent potential in every discarded material.

This holistic approach is based on building relationships with like-minded organisations that want to enable a circular economy, find solutions together that work specifically in the unique environment of the City of Casey, and test them together. We are always transparent about what we do, and I think that if you are trying to have a positive impact and you are honest about your actions, people will take notice.

In the future we hope to see more developers and builders supporting these types of initiatives. We will continue to advocate to see more stringent policies and regulations on rubbish dumping and management of waste on construction sites.

The only way to move an industry as impactful as construction towards a circular economy is to create a level playing field in the sector, while continuing to innovate and test new solutions.



#4 Layla Hargreaves

Hi, I'm Layla, and I work as cafe all-rounder at Little Wolf Café in Cranbourne South. My team and I are passionate about making choices that align with a healthier planet and a circular economy. For instance, our coffee

comes from Single Origin Roasters, who share our values for sustainability. We also serve coffee in compostable cups and pack take-away food in paper packaging. Even our milk supplier is part of our circle of care, taking back our empty milk containers for recycling.

We enjoy sparking thoughtful conversations about sustainability with our customers, but we aren't preachy about it. We simply believe in doing the right thing because, let's face it, our planet could use a little more attention and care. When Reground brought their service to Casey through the Circular Casey initiative, jumping on board was a no-brainer for us. Reground takes our coffee ground waste and converts it into something amazing—they distribute it to local gardeners and community plots, turning waste into valuable fertiliser. It's such a simple and effective way to regenerate our soil, grow more food, and save money on fertiliser, too!

The experience of partnering with Reground has been inspiring. The process is simple, the requirements are straightforward, and the team is phenomenal to work with. I mean, who wouldn't want to turn their waste into a resource for community gardens? It's a win-win!

Looking ahead, we're stoked about continuing our journey towards full-circle sustainability, where **People, Profit and Planet** are inextricably intertwined. Ideally, organic food separation and composting should be the next big milestone, and we hope that Council will continue to create these types of opportunities for businesses like ours to make environmentally sound choices easier.

My recommendation to all café owners is, just do it, start your own journey!

Sustainability is not only good for the planet, but also for community building. Plus, it's just smart business. When an opportunity like the Reground service comes knocking at your door, there's simply no excuse not to open it wide. Do it for the planet, do it for your community, and do it for the sustainable growth of your business.



#5 Ananth Prakash

My name is Ananth, and I'm a husband, father of two, and a tech professional originally from India, now residing in Casey. My upbringing taught me the importance of resourcefulness and sustainability from an

early age. Growing up, my parents made sure I had everything I needed, but I saw firsthand the dire consequences of the lack of access to essentials, like food and sanitation. I remember when I was 12, I saw a 6-year-old boy picking food from our garbage bin outside. That sight was a turning point in my life; it shaped my commitment to never waste food and make the most of what I had and, later in life, it pushed me to volunteer in programs aimed at eradicating poverty.

When I think about my childhood, we certainly didn't know the meaning of circular economy, but our lifestyle was very sustainable.

No disposable containers—my mum would send me to get milk with a steel container directly to the farm, and things like composting were just the norm.

When my family and I moved to Australia in 2015 we were shocked by the waste culture we found. My wife Thara and I decided that we couldn't change the world, but we could certainly live by our values and make sure we would set the right example for our children.

When we bought our first home, we planted fruit trees and created a veggie patch in our garden, taught our children to compost and produce the food we eat. We are really good at recycling and we make sure we avoid creating unnecessary waste. The next step for us was looking at our home. We installed solar panels and now from October through April, there's no electricity bills that comes out of our house. Good for the planet and the wallet!

My wife is a real star, she's very active in the Casey community and took me and the children to a Circular Casey event. It was there we were introduced to various organisations, including Evitat, a company that supports home renovators to make houses more sustainable and energy efficient through a digital platform.

We tested the app and we both love how easy it is to use. My background in tech has always led me to believe that data is essential. So, if you decide to install solar panels or improve insulation in your house, and you have an app that helps you track how much electricity and money you are saving through those changes, well, you won't turn away. You will be motivated to do more!

A few months ago, we attended the Eco Renovators Expo at Cranbourne West organised by Evitat. We enjoyed the panel discussions, had a free consultation with a team of experts, and learned how to apply **PassivHaus** principles to our home, like resealing the house and installing blinds for better temperature regulation.

I always use my experiences to show my friends how making better choices for the environment always pays, and I hope I can share the message with as many people as possible.

It might seem like we are just drops in the ocean, but collective behavior can create ripples of change. An informed community with a collective voice can influence policies and enable more businesses that are good for the planet to become the norm.



#6 Brad Manser

Hey everyone, I'm Brad Manser. With Ian McEwan, I run architecture studio Ian McEwan Designs. a

Over the years, our architectural firm has been about more than creating visually stunning designs. As history enthusiasts, we've al-

ways had a special place in our hearts for heritage buildings. Restoring these architectural gems isn't just a job for us—it's a passion.

Some houses have history, and you become part of that history when you take over. It's truly special. These projects inherently come with constraints, and they've forced us to adapt to the spaces and reinvent the way we work. We didn't realise it then, but this love for history and preservation was our first foray into the circular economy, even if we weren't particularly familiar with the term. In fact, with heritage building, demolishing is simply not an option, so you learn to make the most of what you have, save as much as you can, and work with existing resources.

Our understanding of the circular economy took a decisive turn during a collaboration with Council and FTD Circular during Circular Casey. We were tasked with the renovation of Brentwood Community Centre and had an opportunity to put into practice what had been, until then, a vague understanding of the concept. We were asked to redesign some areas and replace the toilets using unused appliances from another facility. Initially we were worried about how that would work, but we adapted and made it a success. The experience turned out to be a real awakening for us regarding the potential of using products as part of a **material bank** and enable a circular economy.

Family life has brought a new urgency to our work. With children and grandchildren, we've come to see that our responsibility goes beyond our immediate projects. We're building a legacy for future generations, laying the foundation for a more sustainable tomorrow. The new generation of architects, who have been educated around principles of sustainability, are already pushing the envelope, and we couldn't be more excited to be part of that change.

Looking forward, we see the digitalisation of assets as the next big step. Imagine a future where councils and companies could tap into a comprehensive digital catalogue of existing materials and products for use in new construction or renovation projects. This would not only conserve resources but could completely revolutionise our approach to sustainable architecture.

Participating in this initiative is just the beginning for us, and we are looking forward to taking these learnings to our next projects.

MEET THE ARTIST

THANK YOU FOR VISITING ART FOR IMPACT. MEET THE LOCAL ARTIST BEHIND THE PORTRAITS.



I have the pleasure of introducing myself as Zainab Hasani, I am an Afghan citizen.

In my role as an artist, I find joy and inspiration in the world of creativity and cannot imagine my life without it. With a brush or a pencil in hand, I translate my thoughts, emotions, and stories onto canvas and paper.

For me, art is a language that goes beyond words, a way to share my perspective and connect with others. Whether it's through vibrant colours or delicate lines, I strive to evoke feelings and spark conversations.

Welcome to my artistic journey.